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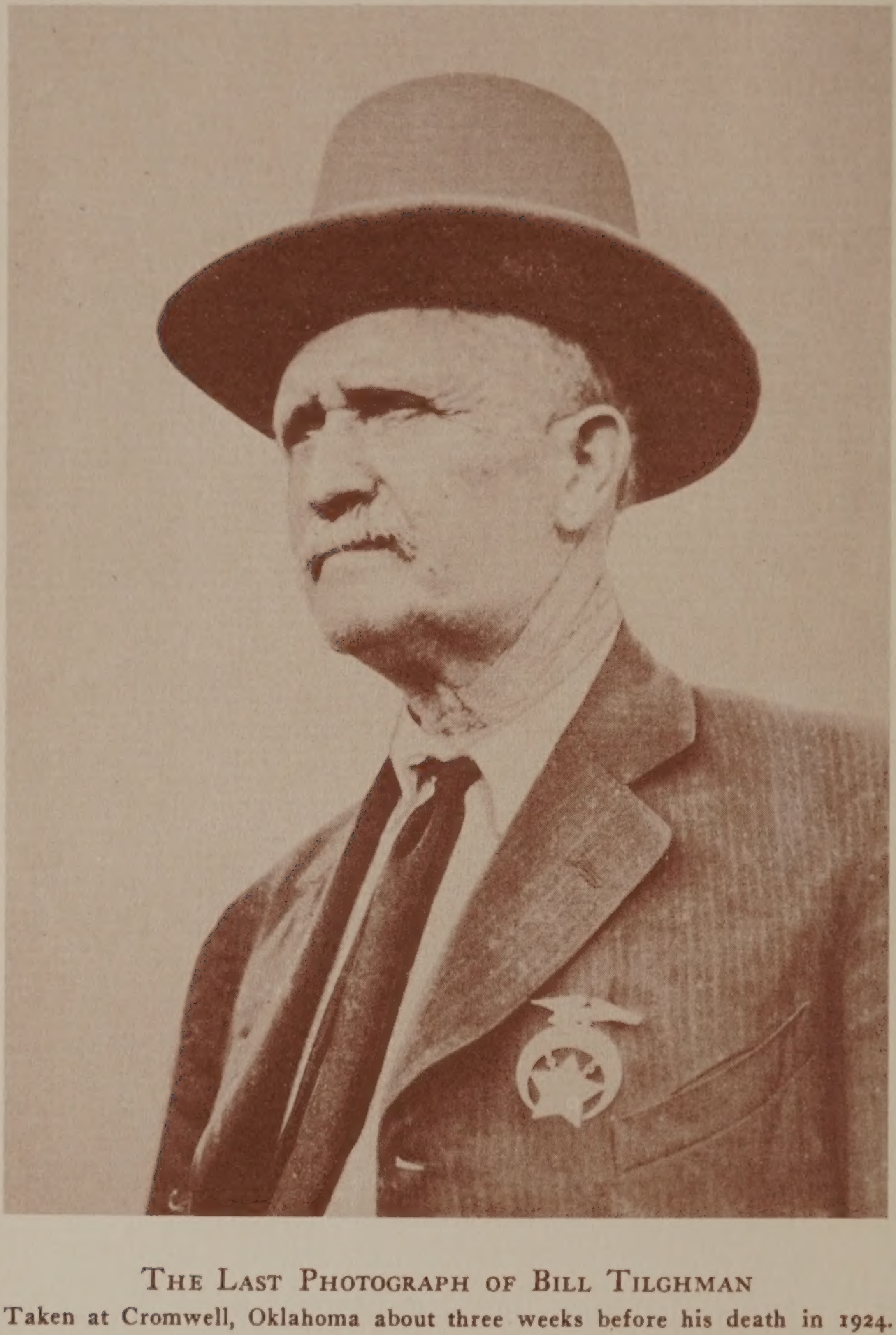

THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH OF BILL TILGHMAN
Taken at Cromwell, Oklahoma about three weeks before his death in 1924.

Marshal of the Last Frontier

Life and services of
William Matthew (Bill) Tilghman
for 50 years one of the greatest peace officers of the West

by his wife
ZOE A. TILGHMAN

THE ARTHUR H. CLARK COMPANY
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To my Sons
Tench and Woodrow

1981916

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Taken at Cromwell, Oklahoma about three weeks before his death in 1924.

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Bill's first wife. Married, 1877; died, 1900.

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Bill's second wife and author of this biography.

THE FIRST CITY OFFICERS OF PERRY, OKLAHOMA, 1893 . . 5

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Foreword

"Perhaps the greatest of them all."—*William McLeod Raine*

In writing the life of William Matthew Tilghman, and his fifty years of service as one of the greatest peace officers of the West, my first and most important requisite has been truthfulness; for above all the other qualities of this well-rounded, beneficent man shone his utter devotion to truth. His life is also the story of the evolution of the Southwest, with all its stark courage, quick-witted resourcefulness, and integrity of purpose. Bill helped to make that history. He was an embodiment of the spirit of the time and cannot be pictured apart from it.

I have made extensive studies of the area and period covered, including research in the collections of the historical societies of Kansas and Oklahoma; but the greater portion of this book is based upon original personal, and hitherto unpublished, matter. The most important source of information concerning the earlier years is furnished by Bill himself, in his note-books and in unpublished memoirs written a few months before his death.

During the twenty-four years since an assassin's bullet ended his life, the knowledge that I must write his story has always been with me. Family connection with the subject enables the biographer to present a more intimate picture. At the same time it involves the problem of perspective. I have tried to steer a valid middle course. I have exchanged letters and had personal talks with many of Bill's associates, thus checking my own knowledge and learning additional details. I have tried to present the resulting intimate picture clearly, objectively, and free from distortion.

Among those whose help I wish to acknowledge are Chris Madsen, Oscar Halsell, John Hale, J. B. A. Robertson, William H. Crume and Parker Lamoore. Nearly all of these are now gone.

I am also indebted to Bill's mother, Amanda Tilghman; to his sister, Josephine Tilghman Locke; and to my stepson, Charles Tilghman. I should acknowledge too the encouragement and the "prodding" of Foster Harris.

If from this story readers feel that they also have known Bill, if they have a new and deeper understanding of the quality of the lives which founded this new West, then the writing of this book will be justified, its aim accomplished.

ZOE A. TILGHMAN

Oklahoma City
August 1948

A Chronology

1846 November, William Matthew Tilghman and Amanda Shepherd married, Fairfield, Iowa.

1854 Third child born, William Matthew junior, at Fort Dodge, Iowa, july 4.

1857 Removed to farm near Atchison, Kansas.

1870 William Jr. "Bill," makes first trip West, hunting.

1871 Buffalo hunting, around Ellsworth, Kansas.

1872 Dodge City founded.

1872-3 Bill hunting in Kansas and Colorado.

1873-4 Hunting and trading with Indians, Kansas and Indian Territory.

1874 Battle of Adobe Walls; Bill makes first trip into eastern Indian Territory, on new MKT railroad; first deputy commission from Charlie Bassett.

1877 Married Flora Kendall.

1878 Under-sheriff for Bat Masterson, Ford county, Kansas; Scout for army in Indian raid of Dull Knife.

1880 In New Mexico with new railroad building.

1882 Under-sheriff for Pat Sughrue, Ford county, Kansas.

1884-6 City marshal of Dodge City, Kansas.

1889 January, Bill gets county records from Cimarron, Kansas. April 23, arrives at Guthrie, Oklahoma, day after the Opening.

1891 Commissioned as deputy marshal in Oklahoma by U.S. Marshal Wm. Grimes; september, took claim near Chandler, Oklahoma.

1893 U.S. marshal in charge at Perry, Oklahoma, at opening of the Cherokee strip; chief of police of Perry.

1896 January 12, capture of Bill Doolin; september, capture of Bill Raidler.

1897 March, cyclone at Chandler.

1898 Indian mob cases.

1900	Bill elected sheriff of Lincoln county, Oklahoma territory.
1902	Re-elected sheriff.
1903	July 15, married Zoe Agnes Stratton.
1904	Delegate to National Democratic Convention; named member of Notification committee.
1905	President Theodore Roosevelt sends him to Mexico.
1907	Oklahoma becomes a state.
1909	Governor Haskell calls him in the Crazy Snake trouble.
1909-10	Bill spends winter at race track, Juarez, Mexico.
1910	Elected State Senator.
1911	July 4, chief of police, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
1913	Resigns as chief of police.
1914	Meets General Blanco at Matamoros, Mexico.
1915	Makes moving picture.
1923	Work for Governor M. E. Trapp.
1924	August, city marshal of Cromwell, Oklahoma; november 1, killed in duty.

Preludes

Special Deputy

The year was 1874. For six years Ulysses S. Grant had sat in the White House. And Mexico, with half a century of turmoil behind, was getting her fifty-first ruler in fifty-one years. In the northern Republic, after the turbulent recession of the Civil War, the tide of westward homing was once more in flood. It carried men who felt the nameless urge of the pioneer, and boys who had put on manhood before the guns of Shiloh and the Wilderness, at Gettysburg and Vicksburg and Atlanta, and could no more content themselves in the petty round of toil in shop or farm; boys whose feet, long schooled in marching, turned still to wandering. There were emigrants who had followed the call of free America across the wide salt seas; land-hungry men, who sought a home for themselves and their children, to strike their roots in this new soil; dreamers who followed their vision of opportunity, and a future to build. Also there were men of darker souls, whose hand was against their brethren; who had, perhaps, fled from justice elsewhere, and were more willing to make their way by foul means than fair; they would fill the shallow graves upon Boot Hill. All these were in that westward surge.

Steel rails had spanned the continent. A second line linked the Mississippi and the mountains, and a third, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, was pushing westward. For a time its terminus was Dodge City, a rambunctious, straggling town of wooden buildings along both sides of the railroad tracks. Even then it had a touch of originality; its chief thoroughfare was not called Main street but Front street. The residence portion comprised some wooden shacks and cottages, and low sod houses. Half a mile away, the wide Arkansas river sprawled in its bed of sand, or ran full flowing with flood of mountain snows. A fringe of willows and cottonwood brush and lofty cottonwood parent trees marked its course.

Six miles east stood Fort Dodge, from which the city took its name, housing blue-coated soldiers whose work was to repress the warlike Indians.

And off below the river—often, too, along the trails and in the settlements, were these red men, harassed, driven, striking back at the intruders with savage war, not understanding the doom that was upon them. They knew not the myriads of white men, nor their power, their insatiable grasping. All the wide free land, and buffalo unnumbered, were the possession and heritage of the warrior tribes.

Ever the white men crowded more and more. Now the Indians had been placed on reservations, given rations, told that they must learn the white man's ways. The seven years since the Medicine Lodge treaties had been turbulent and bitter. This summer marked the last struggle. The tribes united at the losing battle of Adobe Walls. Even now, at the Fort, supplies were unloading, men and horses assembling. General Nelson Miles was preparing the last campaign to crush the hostiles.

The hundred thousand buffalo hides ricked up in the yards of Beverly and Wright, were symbol. These, and the white bones strewed thick upon the prairies, showed the doom of the buffalo. With them would pass the Indian and the plainsman. And up from the southern Trail echoed the trample of longhorns, the yells of cowboys. Climbing up the parallels of the world, they came to establish a new era, the cattle days, and an empire from the Yellowstone to the Rio Grande. These, too, would pass, marking another epoch of the last frontier.

As the settlements increased, the state of Kansas provided government. Here was Ford county, with Dodge City as its seat, a judge and court and sheriff. Yet the law of the six-gun held sway as much as that of the statute book.

Here on a day in summer of 1874, Charlie Bassett, the sheriff, faced a vexatious problem, for it involved either dereliction in his sworn duty, or the highly probable loss of his scalp. A brave and honest man, neither result appealed to him.

Up and down the ruts and dust of Front street rumbled wagons heavy laden with hides or buffalo meat, or outbound with supplies for hunting camps or ranches; farmers' wagons with scantier provision; movers going to Colorado; saddled horses drowsing at hitchracks; hunters and plainsmen and settlers, clad in rough shirts and trousers and coarse, high boots; flashily dressed gamblers with tailored frock coats and fancy vests; soldiers from the Fort, in their neat blue uniforms.

The sheriff pondered.

"Bill Tilghman could do it," he said.

A switch engine, puffing black clouds from its pot-topped smoke stack, rattled a string of freight cars down toward the little red station. A horse, jogging quietly into town, took fright at this strange monster, tried to bolt, and then indulged in some fancy pitching.

His rider, a lithe, slender figure, sat erect, swaying slightly to his mount's motion, magnificently at ease. Imperceptibly his heels turned in the spur rowels; his hand tightened on the reins. But the broncho felt it, and after a dozen jumps, he had enough. He subsided to a modest walk, the engine and his terror forgotten. Turning to a hitching rack, his rider dismounted, giving an affectionate rub to the horse's ear as he passed on to the board sidewalk.

The sheriff watched him enter Bob Wright's store, and followed.

"Hy-ah, Bill," he said. "What you doin' these days?"

The young man turned and faced him. He was a slender youth of nineteen, just under six feet, erect and finely muscled. A mass of dark,[1] curly hair tumbled back and hung down his neck. The face was rather thin, with wide, low, forehead, delicately chiseled mouth, straight nose, and well-set eyes of clear gray-blue; eyes which looked keenly and fearlessly, and with good will to all the world. He wore the plainsman's garb, jeans trousers tucked into high boots, a blue flannel shirt, and cartridge belt with a Colt forty-five in the holster.

"Been up in Colorado," he replied, "and had a brush with Indians coming down. I've been resting up a little."

"They ran all the hunters out of the Panhandle. Reckon they're all out that way?"

"The ones that chased me weren't. They're on the warpath. Might be anywhere."

Sheriff Bassett came to the point.

"You know Bill Anderson? He stole a yoke of oxen from Thad Waters, and he's gone south of the river with them. Now you know that country, and you've traded with the Cheyenne. I'll give you fifty dollars if you'll go after him; or get the oxen back anyhow. I'll make you a deputy."

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[1] His hair was black. After a fever, it never was so thick. His mustache a dark brown.

Young Tilghman considered. "He had a camp down on Eagle Chief,[2] I think. Likely he'd have gone there."

"Yes," said the sheriff, eagerly. "You'd know right where to go. And you're friends with the Indians . . ."

"Not when they're on the warpath. They don't know any white man then. They told me so."

The sheriff was silent. He picked up a handful of dried prunes from the open barrel beside the counter, and began dropping them back one by one, moodily. A smile flashed over young Tilghman's face.

"All right. I'll go," he said.

Two hours later, having eaten, and fed his horse, he stood before the sheriff and held up his right hand, to be sworn as an officer of the Law.

To neither Charlie Bassett nor his deputy was given vision of the years to come, the call to service, many times repeated, the oath renewed, because always men trusted and honored him, turned to him for high and faithful labors, saying as the sheriff had said, "Bill Tilghman can do it," and in time, "Tilghman always gets his man."

Bill Anderson was gone from the Eagle Chief, but the stolen oxen were there, and after a five-day trip, the young special deputy delivered them to the sheriff, and resigned his commission. He had done the work.

---

[2] Name of a creek.

Concerning The Tilghmans

Richard the Emigrant, first of the Tilghmans in America, came to Maryland about 1661 to take possession of a grant of land which he had received from his friend Lord Baltimore. This Richard was ninth in descent from Richard Tilghman, owner of Holoway Court, parish of Snodland, in Kent, in 1344. He brought with him the family tree, which has been meticulously kept by his descendants; and he spelled his name with *gh,* which spelling has been used regularly since 1580. Earlier records sometimes use Tylman or Tilman.

It is a name of Anglo-Saxon origin; till-man, a tiller of the soil. The motto of the house *Spes alit agricolam,* "Hope sustains the farmer," has punning reference to this.

Richard's great-grandmother Susanna Whetenhall, was a descendant in two lines from Edward III. His father, Oswald Tilghman, had lived in London. Richard became a physician, "chirurgeon," and served in the navy in the time of Cromwell. His grant of land lay on the eastern shore of Chesapeake bay, and his home "The Hermitage" is still in possession of the family. Here he built a dwelling, practiced his profession, and reared a family. His descendants played prominent parts in the colony, in the Revolutionary war, and all subsequent wars. Nor have they been unnoted in civilian life.

Matthew Tilghman, grandson of Richard the Emigrant, was known as the Patriarch of Maryland. For years "he was practical governor of the Colony." He was a member of the convention that framed the Declaration of Independence, but was called home to preside at the meeting of the Maryland Constitutional Convention, so missed being a signer.[3]

His son Richard was a major in the American army in the Revolution. His son, Matthew Tilghman of Chestertown, died when his youngest son William, born july 4, 1820, was a small boy. There were three older sons and three daughters. Richard Lloyd, the eldest, a naval officer, was lost with his ship at sea. James was an engineer and became connected with construction of the Weldon railroad. Tench, with the Tilghman good looks and a musical talent of his own, went to California. He was an excellent violinist, and though not professional, was much in demand. He became owner of a tract of land now a part of Sacramento. A gang of speculators sought to obtain it, and when he refused to sell, he was called to his door one night and shot down. With forged deeds, the assassins secured his land.

William Matthew, the youngest son, with the urge of adventure in his blood, ran away from school at nineteen, and enlisted under an assumed name for service in the Florida war. A West Point officer taught the recruits drill and regulations. But the warfare on which the boy soon entered was chiefly guerilla business. Palmetto scrub and pine barrens, swamps and sand, rattlesnakes and alligators were unattractive features of the country which largely offset tropical beauties of palms and live-oaks draped with moss, brilliant flowers, mocking birds, and parrakeets that flew in sweeping clouds of gold and emerald.

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[3] Wilstach (Paul) *Tidewater Maryland.* Indianapolis, 1931, p. 159.

They marched long hot miles seeking Seminoles whom they rarely found until the hidden Indians were taking shots at them. Young Tilghman saw his officer killed. Volunteering for a dangerous errand, he just escaped a bullet that cut the tie strings of his saddle bags.

At home again Chestertown soon proved too quiet, and he journeyed west to St. Louis. Here he worked for a year or two with a trader, making trips into further places. Then he became recruiting officer at St. Louis for the Army.

This business took him into the southern Iowa settlements. And here one day, William Shepherd looked across the street and remarked to his daughter Amanda, "That looks like one of Matt Tilghman's boys."

Inasmuch as he had left Maryland when those boys were small, he could be judging only by family resemblance, and Miss Amanda very much doubted his guess. Nevertheless he went to speak to the young man, and soon brought him over and introduced him triumphantly.

Amanda herself could not remember Maryland, but she remembered a fine house in Cincinnati. Then they had moved to Iowa, and her mother died. Amanda, growing up, had to learn the cruder housekeeping of the frontier cabins, but she always bore the indefinable stamp of gentility, of gracious manners and a sweet and beautiful spirit.

Petite and graceful, with clustering brown curls, rose-leaf complexion, and tilted nose, Amanda Shepherd was the belle of the settlement. But none of the local swains could compare with this young soldier, so at home on the frontier and with the same background and courtly manners that marked her father. With him it was love at first sight, and in a few months they were married.

William Tilghman took his bride to St. Louis, where his recruiting duties were increasing. It was 1846 and the government was sending garrisons to many frontier posts. The annexation of Texas, and war with Mexico in prospect, were the political questions of the day. Two children were born here, Richard Lloyd and Mary.

The Mexican war came and passed. Recruiting dropped. But Tilghman, accustomed to the army, obtained a permit as sutler at Fort Dodge, Iowa. Here his second son, William Matthew, was born july 4, 1854 and given his father's name. The date july 4, was also the father's birthday.

Soon after this Fort Dodge was abandoned and the garrison was ordered to a newer frontier post, Fort Ridgely[4] in Minnesota. They made the trip by steamboat, up the Mississippi and then on the winding reaches of the Minnesota river. Here were the Mdewankton Sioux.

In northern Iowa also were many Indians, mostly renegades from tribes that had been moved to Kansas. In addition there was a bad element of whites to make friction, so that peaceful Indians and whites had small security.

Tilghman *pere* gave up his sutler business with the closing of Fort Dodge, but the commandant was urgent that he accompany the detachment. Deeming it safe enough with the military, he took his family along.

Hostile eyes watched their progress however, and as the steamer paddled slowly up stream Amanda, sitting on deck with the little William in her arms, saw something flash by and felt a sharp jerk at her sleeve. She sprang up, and her husband, coming to her, stooped and picked up an arrow.

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[4] About fifty miles west of Faribault, Minnesota, but farther by river.

"Did it hit you?" he asked anxiously. "Yes, look! your sleeve's torn." She had all the pioneer woman's nerve, but her lips trembled as she said, "It just missed the baby's head."

The rattle of the soldiers' muskets broke out, shooting at the thickets on the shore.

So before young William finished his first half-year, the dark wings of danger hovered by.

Fort Ridgely, so far, was merely on paper. The arriving soldiers had to construct the buildings. First was a block house; then two detached cabins for the families of the party. Amanda Tilghman with her children was installed in one.

No Indians had been seen. They were supposed to be off on their summer hunt. So, after three weeks of work, the men were given a day off to go hunting. Fresh meat would be a welcome change from the salt pork rations. Only a few men were left at the block house.

Then the Indians struck. Dick and Mary, outside, saw them and ran in to their mother. Amanda snatched up the baby, and holding Mary's hand, raced toward the block house. Indians were running across the clearing, more pouring from the woods. Shots volleyed from the Fort. The men there were in action. Yells behind her. The big gate swung open a little, two men with muskets showing. A man in the lookout above, fired. Someone shouted, "You got him." A choking cough sounded in her ear as Amanda slipped in and the gate slammed.

The firing brought back the hunters, and the Indians caught between them and the fort were quickly driven off.

William Tilghman, holding out his finger for the grasp of the baby hand, grinned at his small son.

"You're starting earlier than I did. I guess you'll get your share of danger, too."

It was through the father's own hand that the Dark Presence again came near. When ready to return to Iowa, a trip of four hundred miles, he decided to go by wagon.

"The Indians will all be watching the river," he said.

So it proved, for they saw no redskin the whole trip. But, going through prairie country, they prudently gathered dry wood for their campfires. Tilghman, picking up a large chunk, tossed it into the back of the wagon, not knowing that his wife had laid the little one on the quilts there. The wood struck his forehead. For a time they feared he was dead, but with such aid as they could give, he finally opened his eyes. The shock over, he soon recovered but the deep scalp cut left a scar for life.

"Willie" was two years old, when, in november, William and Amanda set out for a visit at her brother's home thirty-five miles away. They hitched one horse to a light sleigh, and took with them Willie, their youngest. The trip went well until mid-afternoon, when a heavy snow began falling. There was no place to stop, no house along the way, so they pushed on. Long after nightfall the horse, floundering in the deepening drifts, was nearly exhausted. It was bitter cold. William Tilghman unhitched the horse, and set his wife upon it, tying the buffalo robes of the sleigh about her. He lifted the child to her arms.

"You go on," he said, "Tobe will take you through, and I will make it somehow."

Both knew they were facing death. It was nearly midnight, long past the bedtime of farm folk, when the faithful Tobe, plodding and struggling through the drifts, brought Amanda and her child to her brother's door. He had to lift her and carry her in, but neither she nor the little William were hurt by their near freeze. By a fortunate chance–by God's providence, said her sister-in-law–the Shepherds were up late that night, taking care of the meat from their hogs just butchered.

Mr. Shepherd at once set off to find William, who was at his last strength, able only faintly to answer his rescuer's halloo.

That was one of the worst winters known in Iowa, and William Tilghman swore he'd never spend another there. Next fall, he moved his family to a new farm, four miles southwest of Atchison, Kansas, near the Missouri river.

On A Boy's Shoulders

Developing a homestead from raw land was a labor that called for all hands. So young Willie, as the family called him, was early bringing in wood, feeding the stock, milking, gathering corn. Work was not too heavy to deprive the boy of play or pranks. All his life he loved joking. But when he threw rocks at a man hired to dig a ditch, and repeated the offense after warning, Amanda refused to consider it fun. She used a sharp hickory with reforming vigor.

There were other children now; Frank, Josephine, who was like Willie in face and coloring; then Harriet, with elfin black eyes and hair, who grew to be the image of her Grandmother Tilghman. Frank, at two years old, was a victim of infantile paralysis, which kept him from natural companionship in work and play, and left him with one arm weak, and a slight limp.

In five years they had the farm improved. The house, though small, was good for the time and place, and the family life was marked with the grace and refinement that belonged to the ancestral homes in Maryland. Amanda loved flowers, and in spite of the pioneer farm toil and a growing family, she kept the door yard beautiful. Roses and all the old time garden flowers bloomed. Big native trees gave shade, an apple and a peach orchard flanked two sides of the house. A creek flowed through the woodland of the farm, and made a place of delight for a boy to wander, to fish and hunt and swim and gather walnuts. A little farther was a bigger swimming hole, the muddy Missouri. The high plateau broke off with steep, wooded slopes and deeply cut ravines, where blackberries grew "by wagonloads." In the fall, there were persimmons and pawpaws.

Warfare raged in Kansas. Every week came fresh tales of bushwhackers and jayhawkers, murders and massacres. Armed men coming to a settler's cabin and shooting him down. Bitter reprisals that followed such raids. Names were repeated; Quantrill and John Brown; slavery, free-soil; Bleeding Kansas; North and South; and Lincoln.

Then from the far Atlantic roared the guns of Sumter. War.

William Tilghman, with years of military experience, was at once called upon. He put the Atchison companies through squads right and the rudiments of the manual. They all knew how to shoot. They marched away with better step and formation than most. Bull Run staged a bloody curtain raiser. South and North woke to a grim realization. The president called for more soldiers—three years or "for the duration of the war."

Amanda with the children kept up the farm work, as her husband spent more and more time at drill. Foreboding was in her heart. She woke one night, the moonlight streaming peacefully into the room, the whippoorwill calling plaintively through the shadows. But her mouth was dry, her heart pounding. She reached out her hand to touch her husband, sleeping. He'd been plowing corn that day. She would not waken him. But at breakfast she said:

"I had a dream last night. I saw you going off to war–in your uniform. I woke up frightened. It was so real!"

He scoffed. "Just a dream. I'm doing good work for the army right here. And it would be bad to leave you with the children. No need for me to go."

Five weeks later he rode home from Atchison and stood before her in the kitchen door.

"Amanda," he said. "I've got to go!"

Officer appointments in the volunteers were political, but he was made quartermaster sergeant. Amanda, one of the scores of heart-strained women gathered there, saw him, smart and soldierly in his blue uniform, saw him lift his hand to take the oath; and beside him a drummer boy, Dick, her first-born, solemn and star-eyed. The bugle shrilled. They marched away.

The women held up their heads and waved handkerchiefs in farewell, forcing smiles to their lips. Tears would come later. Amanda Tilghman, holding little Frank's hand, the girls walking soberly behind her, moved toward the wagon and climbed in. Willie, young William, slight but sturdy at eight years, untied the team and took the reins. He was the man of the family now.

On him fell the farm work, the stock to be cared for. When the first sun rays glowed redly on the wide Missouri, and hoar frost glittered on fallen leaf and grass and whitened fence rails, he stood like a charioteer in the front of the wagon, his head scarcely higher than the sideboard, driving his team to the field.

He had a heavy glove his mother had knitted and faced with soft leather from an old boot top, and a hard, sharp, hickory husking peg held in place by a leather thong. Jab–rip–and the dry husks were torn. A jerk, and the long yellow ear described a golden arc as it sailed into the wagon. By noon he had his load, to be shoveled into the crib with the big iron scoop.

Sometimes Josie helped him. Mary was married now. Josie was nearly as tall as he, a tomboy and his ready companion. She made another hand at the numerous farm chores.

Sometimes he went hunting, carrying an old muzzle-loading gun of his father's, taller than himself. Prairie chickens and quail and rabbits were plentiful. Long wedges of wild duck, stately wild geese, honking through the dark skyways, swooped and circled and came to rest in the frosty mornings to feed.

Hunting meant food for the family. They had little meat except what young William killed. Amanda stored potatoes and turnips, dried beans and pumpkin; made kraut and apple butter. Jellies and preserves which took costly sugar, were reserved for special occasions. Once in two weeks they went to the mill to have corn ground. Sometimes, if Amanda visited at a home where they had wheat biscuits, she would bring home one apiece as a treat for the children. But they had milk and butter, and with her thrifty management there was always something to eat. When snow was on the ground, Willie, with his dog, brought in as many rabbits as he could. The forequarters served their table, and the hams, the choicest part, Amanda put down in a keg of brine, for summer. Soaked until the salt was out, and cooked expertly, they were almost as good as fresh meat.

Around the fireplace of evenings, Amanda taught the children to read, mostly from the newspaper. They were eager for war news. And they learned to write and "cipher." Sundays when the weather was fair they drove to Atchison, to church. And Amanda, for all her farm work, found time to do her share of bandages and knitting for the soldiers.

William, the father, had been in the battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas. In the fall he came home on a furlough, and put in a crop of winter wheat. The family drove with him to Fort Scott, a hundred miles away; then he left again.

The second winter dragged through. They had little but milk and cornbread, and a few potatoes. Willie had started plowing, but laid off when there came a cold, raw day, with showers whipping before the northeast wind.

Willie, with his heavy musket, tramped through the mud to a grassy slough, pushed through the dry cattails. There on the open water, feeding, were the great wild geese. Crouching in the wet cover, he set his musket on his forked rest stick, and took careful aim. The birds were so close together. Bang! the puff of blue smoke curled over the marsh, and two gray, black-marked honkers lay with heads fallen, a stain of red in the water.

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The flock rose a little and settled back. They had not yet been hunted enough to make them fearful and wary. Drawing back to reload, he saw three more geese, beside a little point a few yards to the right. Slowly he crept along to the point; still too far from the birds. But he must risk it.

Flat on his stomach in the muddy marsh; his eye sighting along the barrel, his finger on the trigger. With a sudden squawk a goose spread its wings, but failed to rise. In a moment it toppled limp against the shore bushes. Three!

With trembling fingers the boy reloaded. Not likely to get another shot, but–he looked up at the flock, circling, slowly coming down again. Could he make a wing shot? He crouched and set his rest, tilted the gun upward. The birds swung lower. Now, that one! The heavy boom of the gun, and a great gray flyer plummeted into the water.

Four geese! It was not so easy to get them. The first two were near shore, but beyond reach of the longest stick he could find, so he waded into the icy water. The third was easy.

But the last was in deep water. He searched for the tallest willow he could cut, waded out, and could almost reach the bird. A little more–splash! There was a step-off and he went in over his head, came up sputtering and gasping. His heavy boots and clothes weighed him down. He could barely get his face out to breathe. Better get back to the shore. Only there was the goose, an arm's length away. He had three. No, he wouldn't leave it.

Drawing a deep breath, he plunged, grasped it and turned. He went under. He had read of kicking one's boots off in water. But these wouldn't come off. It would take a hard pull with the bootjack, and Josie standing on the toe, to budge them. One more breath, battling a few strokes, and again he went down.

His feet struck bottom. He waded out. The chill of the cold air on his wet clothes was biting. Four big geese, each weighing about ten pounds; and his musket, twenty-five. He couldn't carry all that. Hiding his gun and two of the geese beside the rail fence, he tied the other two together with a strand of twisted slough grass, slung them over his shoulder and set out. A long two miles it was, in his wet clothes and the bitter wind. It was late afternoon.

Josie, carrying in the evening's wood, was coming out for another load when he stepped on the porch. Her eyes widened.

"Willie! Oh look, Mother, Willie's got two geese!"

With a hasty kick of his foot on the scraper, getting off the worst of the mud, he marched in with a pardonable swagger, to be greeted with excited admiration. Two geese was a grand bag for a man, let alone a ten year old boy. And what a feast for them all! Amanda's face shone too. The food problem had been worrying her. But at once concern was uppermost.

"Willie! you're all wet. Come here by the fire and I'll get you some dry clothes, quick."

"Oh I can't, mother. I had to leave my gun, and I've got to go back and get it. And I killed two more geese."

"Two more?"

"Yes. I got four. And I couldn't carry them. They're big ones, too."

It was quickly settled that Josie should go with him. She took the larger goose, while he carried his gun and the other one. It was dark when they reached home. Amanda had done the milking and fed the horses. She had dry clothes and a pot of coffee ready, made from potatoes, their war-time substitute. Supper of corn bread and milk was good when one was tired and hungry. And in imagination they were already eating roast goose.

There were no lessons that night. Amanda was busy picking the geese, thriftily saving the soft feathers. Frank had the quills to play Indian. And the children talked, eager to hear Willie tell again of his grand exploit. He did not dwell too much on his near drowning, just let them know it was a tough job to get that last goose. Of course he did not want to frighten his mother nor to lessen his hero standing with the others.

A Hero Riding

It was on a blackberry excursion that young Bill Tilghman, twelve years old, unwittingly met with Destiny. With his sisters and Frank and some neighbor children, lunch and pails and baskets in the wagon, they set out for the river breaks where the long canes bent with their weight of juicy berries. Their way lay for some distance along the main road west from Atchison, and on it came another traveller, who pulled up and greeted them. The children stared, round-eyed, and Bill, especially, noted every detail of the stranger's appearance.

He was mounted, indeed, upon no prancing charger, only on a sturdy government mule. But he rode with the easy grace of the plainsman. His buckskin jacket and broad hat were strange to their eyes, and savored of far regions. Two big pistols hung from his belt. His boots were of fine tanned leather.

Tall he was, over six feet, splendidly built, and his face as handsome as his form, with strong, clear-cut features and keen dark blue eyes, long drooping mustache, and hair curling upon his shoulders. Distinction sat upon him as a garment. He spoke in a slow, assured manner.

"Good morning, boys; and young ladies." The girls' eyes sparkled as they strove to keep down embarrassed giggles. It was flattering to be called young ladies, especially by such a handsome stranger.

"Did you happen to see a man driving a span of mules to a covered wagon?" he asked.

Bill, from his position as driver, answered.

"Yes sir, we did. About two miles back."

"Uh. And does this road lead straight to Atchison? No turning off anywhere?"

"Yes sir, it goes right on to town."

"Thank you. Good day." He swung his hat off gracefully, and rode on.

"He certainly is handsome!" "He must be somebody important." "That was a real deerskin shirt." Bill's remark was:

"I'd like to have a pair of pistols like his."

On saturday as he did the evening chores, Josie came breathlessly to the barn. Frank had just returned from town with the mail.

"Willie! You know that man we met on the road? There's a piece about him in the paper. He's a scout for the government, and he was after that man because he stole the mules and wagon."

She seized a feed bucket and they hurried through the work. Excited and curious as they were, both knew the necessity of getting the chores done.

Josie's report had been sketchy. As their mother laid the paper aside, they seized it eagerly.

"Atchison had a distinguished visitor this week. Mr. William B. Hickok, famous marshal of Abilene, known as 'Wild Bill'; the most expert pistol shot in the West. He is now a deputy U.S. marshal and scout at Fort Hays, and came here, following for four hundred miles a stolen team of mules and a wagon. The thief had just sold them, but Wild Bill nabbed him before he left town, and took back the stolen property."

The story told of Wild Bill's life, of his service in the army and as a scout.

He had won new fame as a tamer of bad men, being city marshal of Abilene, the cow-town, when the early cattle drives came north. He fired pop-shots from the hip, without pausing to take aim, and could shoot equally well with either hand.

Wild Bill became the hero and pattern for adventure for young Bill Tilghman. He clipped the story from the paper, read and re-read it, and showed it to his boy companions. For weeks he talked of Wild Bill, even dreamed of him.

He had a pair of cap-and-ball pistols, and now all the money he could get hold of, he spent for caps, powder and lead. He practiced shooting pop-shots from the hip, with both hands, in emulation of Wild Bill. Left-hand shooting was extremely hard at first; and the quick draw, and shooting as soon as the gun was leveled, aiming in fact in the very motion of drawing it, by judgment rather than actual sighting, was a refinement of skill that sometimes seemed almost impossible. But he kept determinedly at it, and the practice of a thousand shots told. The time came when he could hit a rabbit or a prairie chicken sitting in the grass thirty feet away, with a quick pop-shot.

What if his boots had gaping holes in them, and his mother counseled buying new ones? "They're cooler for summer," he said, "and I'll have harvest money to buy boots before winter." Powder and caps were more important then.

Would he be a scout, like Wild Bill Hickok, hunting Indians? A marshal, keeping order and safety in a town? Or riding four hundred miles to catch a thief? Boyish dreams wove themselves through the faintly pungent smoke clouds of the black powder, as he fired and reloaded, practicing in the timber and pasture of the farm. Dreams. All these and more, were held in the keeping of the years.

With the development of automatic firearms, the technique of the old six-shooters is being lost. How did the marksmen of the Old West perform their wizardry? Now and then one sees in a picture, a man extending his arm full length. It never was done that way. While the amateur stretched, the expert gave a flip of his wrist, and his bullet was in the other's anatomy before that creature had his gun poised.

The technique of this shooting was timed and co-ordinated muscular movements measured to a perfect efficiency. Not an inch of lost motion, nor one-tenth second of time. The gun, whether in belt scabbard or shoulder holster, was placed ready to hand. It leaped from the scabbard by an upward flick of the wrist, with perhaps a slight "following" motion of the forearm, with the long-barrelled cap-and-ball pistols, such as Wild Bill Hickok used.

With the famous Colt's forty-five, the wrist action often was sufficient to move it clear. Either type, as it came out, described an arc, until the muzzle pointed nearly straight up. Then, a second flick of the wrist, and the gun fell in an outward-downward arc, to a horizontal position, pointed straight in front. In the same half-second, the elbow slipped to a pivot on the hip-bone.

No muscle moved to draw back the hammer. As he grasped the gun, the forefinger crooked about the trigger, the thumb rested on the hammer. The weight of the barrel in its descent, drew away from the hammer, and by the time it reached the horizontal position, the gun was cocked. The slightest pressure of the trigger finger, and it fired. If he wanted to shoot quickly, his finger tightened in the last tenth-second of the arc, with such perfect timing that the bullet sped at the exact instant the muzzle came into line.

The marksman could swing the gun in a half circle, holding it steady by the brace of his elbow on the hip. At any point of the arc, a pressure of the finger would send a bullet crashing forth. The gun thus moving would travel only half as far – and take half the time – as one moved from the shoulder. Also, the full-arm movement could not hold the gun steady without special effort which slowed it up.

The two-gun motion was exactly the same, but performed simultaneously. The gun aimed from the hip, level with or just above the belt, would be certain to strike some vital organ. The heavy slug of the forty-five, too, would either kill instantly or produce shock to put the enemy out of commission. "You shoot a man with a small bullet and he may kill you before he dies. But with a forty-five, he's done with," said Bill.

Bill could shoot the head off a chicken or a snake, or hit the spot on a card at from thirty to fifty feet. For the animal targets, of course the gun must swing downward at an angle. But his perfect timing, true eye and muscular coordination, made him as accurate for these as for other shooting.

Besides coordination of hand and eye, the quick flick of the wrist was the peculiar technique of this shooting, which Bill developed perfectly. His wrists were strong and slender, and his hands, in spite of heavy labor, were noticeably small and well-shaped.

Growing Up

The war was over, and the father came home–in darkness; he was weak from long illness in a crude army hospital, and his eyes blinded. The aftermath, for this family, proved as hard as the years of war. Amanda and young Bill must carry on as before. Dick was married and gone. Amanda had the invalid to care for, and to take twice a week into town to the doctor. He recovered the use of one eye, in about two years, and was able to take up the load.

Bill had grown taller, a slender, steel-spring body, a head grown wise with youthful responsibility. At fourteen, he could attend his first school, a three-months term in the rough little building of the country district. The teacher was a gangling, awkward fellow of no great ability, and Bill's learning depended chiefly on his own application. He enjoyed for the first time the carefree association with his fellows, their games and sports, with the new game of baseball. Boys and girls played toss and catch, and ante-over, throwing the ball over the little school house, where the group on the other side tried to catch it, and if successful, came racing around to tag their opponents.

Balls were home made, objects of careful craftmanship. Bill made one, winding rags about a small wooden core, finishing off with string slowly saved from store packages, and with a cover cut from the soft top of an old boot. Amanda had never heard of trigonometry, but she could cunningly shape the lunes that made a smooth, round cover for the ball.

Too close observation of his books really led to Bill's downfall in this school, for having noted that removing two letters from the end of a word left one which was considered highly improper, he scratched them off, and when the spelling class was called, politely hurried up and gave the teacher his book to pronounce the words from. The trick worked, the teacher gave out the word as it appeared, thereby causing an uproar and a near scandal.

Next day the teacher decided to give the offender a licking, but found it a foot race instead, in which he came off loser. He called on the school directors to expel the boy, but found scant sympathy. It was part of the school master's job to watch out for boys' tricks.

"You ought," said the chairman severely, "to have had sense enough to catch the word when you saw it, and not give them the laugh on you."

However, the troublesome pupil did not come any more that term.

Next winter, the teacher was a Mr. Lee, the Tilghman's nearest neighbor, whose three girls, though older than the Tilghman children, often shared the spring wagon when Bill took his sisters to sunday school or merry makings. Lee was a big man, and a good teacher, and Bill made progress in his books. He liked Mr. Lee and tried no tricks on him.

The boys, of course, liked to play war. One day Bill, having been taken prisoner, was searched as a spy. A big boy, Bill Wigglesworth, jerked his boots off, in spite of protests that his feet were terribly sore from frost-bite, incurred while out hunting, and that such roughness exceeded the rules of the game. The bell rang. Bill hurriedly put on his boots, and caught up with his tormentor in time to say, "I'll lick you for that!"

Excitement ran through the school, for Wigglesworth was twice his size. Most of the boys, and girls as well, managed to hang around that evening until the teacher was gone. Then the fight began, a one-round, to-the-finish affair, no Queensberry rules, but gouging and the like barred. And though he got the worst of the battering, Bill hung on until his opponent cried "Enough!"

The two of them were a sight the next morning, with black eyes and swollen lips. Plain evidence; and fighting at school was forbidden. Mr. Lee decided to lick them both. Looking at his stern face and two hundred pounds of muscle, neither boy relished the prospect.

They buried the hatchet and made cause together. They carried in a supply of rocks and agreed that whichever was the first victim should defend himself and the other should back him up with missiles, until they might make terms with the oppressor. After all it had been a fair fight, and, as they considered, outside of his jurisdiction.

But Bill Wigglesworth wilted. He took the hickory, bawling lustily that he would fight no more. Young Tilghman was next, but with a bitter, stubborn streak, he refused to cry out, and the incensed teacher laid on harder.

"Would he fight any more?" he demanded. And the boy said through his teeth: "Yes, I will, when I've got a good reason!"

Furious at this defiance, the man beat him terribly. At last he stopped and began to lecture on the evils of fighting. Bill walked back and gathered up his books; marched to the door and turned, his body shaking with pain, his eyes blazing in a white face. But he spoke levelly, hardly: "Some day I'll pay you for what you've done!"

That was the end of his schooling. The teacher became uneasy. He called at the house and told Amanda that he was sorry to whip the boy so hard, but he was unruly and tried to run the school. He hoped it would do him good and make him a better boy.

Amanda Tilghman had used a hickory switch upon her offspring when she felt they needed it, and the right of a teacher to whip pupils was recognized. But as the mother bathed the great black welts on her son's body, her own anger was roused. A teacher should have proper judgment. With loving insight, too, she saw that the hurt to the boy's mind was far greater than that to his body. An ordinary licking was soon forgotten, but not this one. With her gentle wisdom she counselled him. She would take it up, she said, with the school directors. These gentlemen viewed the welts on his back, which did not heal for weeks. They agreed the discipline was excessive. But as Lee was a valuable teacher, and had been technically within his rights, they did not fire him; they only gave him warning to restrain his temper thereafter.

Spring came, and summer. Still the boy carried the burden in his heart. There was a hardness in his young face, and he kept busy at the farm work, or went off hunting or wandering in the woods with his dog. His laughter and pranks upon the other children were rare now. Sometimes Amanda would slip into his room under the roof at night, with gentle pretext.

"Here's your clean shirt to put on, Willie." She would pull the quilt lightly over him and touch his hair, perhaps kiss him. He was too big to be kissed in public. But in the semi-darkness, he could hide his dignity. That love and understanding were a healing balm.

"Sleep good, Willie and don't get to thinking things."

She was gone, into the soft light coming up the stairway, and the door closed below. He could sleep then, the sleep of a tired, healthy boy.

In the hot summer the Tilghman well failed, and they were obliged to carry drinking water from the Lee's. Josie and Hattie had to do this, mostly, but Bill would slip over after dark. One night he set his tin pail down beside the gate, and went on for a call at the next place. When he came back, an hour later, the pail was full of rocks, and as he threw them out some one glided from behind the lilac bushes. It was Lizzie Lee, his favorite of the family, only a little older than himself.

"Willie, I've wanted to talk to you," she said. "I put those rocks in your pail so I'd hear and know when you came back."

Haltingly, she spoke of their friendship, how he had often taken her and her sisters places, when he might have preferred to go with some one else, how she appreciated this. She was so grieved over his trouble with her father. He, she said, realized his mistake, and also feared some harm from Bill.

"Please, Willie, for my sake, and our friendship–he's my father–don't hurt him. We're all sorry!"

Her eyes were big and dark, her face a white blur in the moonlight. Lizzie was fine and good. He couldn't hurt her. It eased his humiliation to know that Lee feared reprisal from him.

"Yes, I promise," he answered. And strangely, as he tramped home with his pail of water, a new lightness was on him. The burning desire for revenge was gone. That Lee had been unjust and brutal, he still felt. But the emotional strain ended.

Amanda Tilghman, sitting in her rocker on the porch, caught the new note – the old note – in his voice, as he called cheerfully, "Here's some fresh water, mother."

Perhaps in the wisdom of the years, this early travail and triumph had a part in the making of the man; so largely tolerant, too great of soul for malice; forgiving and magnanimous even toward those who wronged him; generous to enemies or opponents, and serenely ignoring their pettiness; he had won that primal victory, the mastery of his own spirit.

Horizons Widen

Atchison county was no longer frontier. Better houses began to replace the first homestead shacks and cabins. The Tilghmans had a new farm house, six rooms, two stories, with porches front and back. A Negro family lived in their old house, and the man helped on the farm. His wife was "aunty" to the girls, and she baked delectable cookies for "Marse Willie."

Bill's father was Squire Tilghman now. His kindness, his sterling integrity, his education and large experience, held the respect of his neighbors. Justice of the Peace was no highly lucrative post, for cases were not too frequent; but it helped. There were still doctor bills to pay. And, too, the bottle on the closet shelf had to be renewed so often. That cost money. Squire Tilghman had never been a drinking man beyond the occasional social glass that was universal custom. But in his long months of darkness and suffering, William Tilghman had sought solace in whiskey. It was better than opium, the doctor said. Now, the habit was hard to break.

Bill's world extended to wider contacts. Atchison county and town was a pleasant background. Comfortable farms; a kindly small town where one knew everybody; no one very rich, none bitterly poor. There were church and school, parties and picnics and visiting. Bill and his sisters had their part in these. There were the Lee girls; Bill's old enemy, Bill Wigglesworth; Fred Sutton, a year or two younger than Bill; and Mollie Prather, who was often Bill's partner in the games or at supper; a budding romance here.

Atchison was a town with notables. It was the home of the brilliant senator from Kansas, John J. Ingalls.

Young Ed Howe had not yet founded the *Atchison Globe*. But Fred Sutton was getting the feel of printer's ink, as a carrier boy, and would later see his own works in print.

Mary, Bill's oldest sister, had married one of the Howes, but her life was destined to be short.

Adjoining the Tilghman farm was Shadow Lawn, home of the Hon. George Glick, lawyer, member of the legislature, and later governor of Kansas. Successful in law and politics, Mr. Glick was also deeply interested in his six hundred acre farm. To young Bill Tilghman, Mr. Glick said, "I'll pay twenty-five cents extra for every gopher you trap on my place."

The county paid a bounty of ten cents per scalp on these pests, and this with some sale of winter furs, coon and possum, was Bill's chief source of pocket money. He was expert in making the "set" required to trap the rodents.

Eagerly he combed Mr. Glick's lands as well as those at home, and as his catch multiplied, so also did his longing. Here at last was his chance to supply his own needs and still have enough left over to help out at home. He wanted to be honest, but–. At last he put all his gopher scalps in tin cans and buried them on the Glick land. Then he dug them up and took them to the owner.

"I got them out of the ground," he said. "Some in the orchard and some in the strawberry patch."

Mr. Glick was well pleased and paid cheerfully. The additional ten cents from the county made Bill rich. He bought a supply of powder and lead for himself, hair ribbons for his sisters, and gave his mother the rest.

But Amanda was inquisitive. How did he get so much money? How many scalps did he have?

His memory was poor, but he stuck to it that he had got about half his scalps from Mr. Glick's land and received the extra bounty.

By the time he was fourteen, Bill had bought himself a horse. As his father recovered, he began to "work out." His first job was that of herding cattle for a freighter. They were a bunch of reserve oxen, or those laid over to rest after a trip. Wire fences were not yet in use, and with so much land still open it was cheaper to herd stock than to build fences. For this work Bill received eight dollars a month and his keep.

In the next year, he worked on the railroad construction near Atchison, driving a scraper team; hours, daylight till dark, in addition to caring for the team. His wages were fifty cents a day.

Harvest work paid the same. Reapers were in use, but men had to follow and bind the bundles; another group piled them into shocks. Bill could "fill his station" at either job. In thrashing also he was often placed to cut the bundles and feed them into the machine; this required a quick hand and eye. Two men worked at it, and Bill was proud that he could stand up with any one there. On sundays he had his week's wage, three dollars. He took it home to his mother.

Besides his horse, Bill bought himself a pair of "store" pants, and later a coat. They did not match, but in his own eyes and those of his companions, they were handsome and becoming. Better than home made garments, and befitting the dignity of a young man growing up.

He had ridden almost since he could walk. And he loved horses. But he and the boys with whom he chummed found sport in riding the calves which were kept up in the lot by day, while the cows were shut in at night. With no saddle, this was a mere match to see how long they could stick, for as every cowman knows, a steer does effective pitching. One day when there were visitors, Bill and the two boys went out to ride the calves. Bill mounted a husky yearling, which pitched him off at last, his head striking a tree. He came to in the house, with his mother pouring water in his face. He promised her then he would ride calves no more. But he had already obtained excellent training, and later, he could ride any wild horse to break it.

Fishing and swimming, too, were favorite pastimes. When the river was low, he, with some companion, would set night lines for fish. Thus he learned to handle a boat. So far, his training was that of a farm boy. He had scarcely been outside of the county. Would he marry and settle down, as another farmer of his community? Or would the blood of his forebears assert itself, carry him to life and adventure, wide wandering, and a name of honor?

First Adventure

Bill was sixteen, a slender bright-faced lad, sober but with flashes of fun and fond of pranks, a good worker wherever he was placed, and with a keen sense of honor. He was a master shot with pistol, rifle or shotgun, he could swim across the Missouri river, was as good as any local man at a foot race, and could ride anything on four feet. Thoughtful and pleasant-mannered, he had some of the courtly grace of the "old families" of Maryland, learned unconsciously from William and Amanda.

In the autumn of 1870 three boy cousins, about Bill's age, arrived to get acquainted and enjoy the adventure of the frontier. There were Will Shepherd and John Frush, from Iowa, driving a team of fine Morgan horses; and Wright Spencer, who came by rail from Maryland. He was a tenderfoot, a quiet, gentlemanly lad, who afforded them no little fun. It was nearly time for pawpaws to ripen, and they asked him if they had these in Maryland.

"No suh," he said. "Possums and coons ah the largest game we have." How the other boys laughed!

But Spencer was no mollycoddle and he entered eagerly into their plans for a trip to the buffalo range. They would have John Frush's team and wagon. They gathered camp equipment. Bill had his two cap-and-ball pistols and the old Springfield rifle which his father had brought back from the war. The Iowa boys had a light squirrel rifle with which Bill shot prairie chickens on their trip.

It was october 9, 1870, three months after Bill's sixteenth birthday. Elate with high adventure, the boys piled the last things into the wagon, waved goodbye to Bill's mother and sisters, and were off for the West.

The West, of which he had dreamed; that held destiny beyond his boyish imaginings; whose colorful life he was to live, and bear in it no mean part. And he was to see it change, and pass forever.

The same gracious sky bends over its prairies, the same stars burn in uranian depths; the same rivers flow in their sandy beds and draw tribute of sweet-watered creeks. And the winds blow, unresting, as if seeking the eternal mystery; now hot and scorching; or as fierce blizzards sweeping down from the Arctic wastes, unwearied by their long journey. The rolling hills, lifting away and away from the rich-grassed bottoms, the high buttes and sharp-cut canyons, still remain, smiling back at the wide-arched sky.

Bill would live to see the prairie grass give way to fields of wheat and alfalfa, and kafir; the great herds that grazed upon them vanish utterly, and the open, trackless wilderness broken by roads and fences, pierced by long ribbons of concrete.

But now, the West meant buffalo and Indians and adventure. And Bill was going to meet them.

They passed Eldorado, Kansas, the outpost of settlements. On the prairies the bluestem grew as high as a horse. Frosts had killed it, and the weather was dry.

A strong wind brought the smell of smoke, and a shadow spread across the horizon. Rabbits and other animals raced southward. A prairie fire. Bill had helped burn off pastures. But this was different; a leaping, roaring demon with the speed of the wind, a mass of black smoke shot with flame. The horses snorted and jumped.

"We must backfire, quick!" Bill knelt beside the wagon, his body hunched low to shelter the match flame. Fire caught and raced away from them, leaving an island of bare black ground. Into this they drove their plunging team. The world was all scorching heat and stifling smoke while the oncoming fire roared toward them. Then, suddenly, with naught to feed it, the fire died. It flashed around their island on either hand and rolled away.

That night they reached Chisholm creek, named for Jesse Chisholm the famous trader. The boys were seasoned campers now, spreading their beds down beside the wagon.

October night! the touch of frost in the air, making it like fresh spring water to one athirst. Snuggle down in the blankets and draw a long, deep breath. There is the North Star, and the Big Dipper, and that great blue-white star so far away and millions of others. The air is misty with star-dust, dimly luminous when the sickle moon slips down. And presently the stars are dimmer and farther off and gone, as eyelids droop and the soft mystery of night enfolds, and you are asleep in the utter comfort and delight of it.

Bill woke with a start, his heart in his throat and emptiness in the pit of his stomach. An ear splitting scream stabbed his ears, snarls and howls and barks.

"What is it?" quavered Will Shepherd. Wright Spencer from Maryland uttered a shuddering moan.

"Wolves and wildcats," replied Bill, his own voice none too steady. Spencer and Shepherd climbed into the wagon, Bill and John Frush sat down against the wagon wheel, guns ready.

Presently they determined that numerous wild animals were gathered about the carcass of a horse which they had passed near the Trail. And the two got up nerve to slip down there. They could make out a confused mass over the dead horse, eating and fighting. They agreed that Bill should shoot with his pistols and John hold the rifle in reserve. So Bill fired the two shots. The savage party broke up, and the boys went back to camp to sleep until morning.

Bill was wakened by a heavy body falling on his feet, and John cried "Wake up, Wildcat Bill!" There was a big wildcat, very dead. Bill's pistol bullet had scarred its side, entering the head behind the left ear. On this account he declared that he had killed it with his left hand. The other boys accepted this and next day they boasted to other travelers of Bill's left-hand shot.

They came to Wichita in mid-morning; the jumping-off place. It was a trading-post of less than a dozen stockade buildings, where trail supplies, shelled corn and liquor were sold. They were delayed half a day, for repair of the ferry, which at last landed them on a sand bar in the Arkansas river, and they had to ford another channel where the water ran into the wagon box, to get across.

Several wagons of settlers going to kill a winter's supply of meat, traveled with them. Toward evening a lone buffalo bull was sighted, and all parties agreed to slip up and to fire together at the count of three. But as John Frush said "one" the bull turned sideways giving a perfect target, and Bill fired, his shot going cleanly through the lungs. The bull plunged off and fell, just as John said "three" and the others fired. Nobody complained of the premature shot, however. Most of them in fact, claimed their shots had killed him, and two men had a fight over it.

They drove on in the morning. At last, coming over a little rise:

"There they are!" The big herd! The prairie, far as the eye could see, was black with buffalo; countless thousands. They were quite indifferent to the wagon, opening out a little way and closing in again, their grazing uninterrupted. All day the hunters traveled through the grazing herds.

At the Ninnescah river some of the wagons stopped, others went on to the Chikaskia.

But the boys from Atchison were bound for high adventure. In another outfit were three young fellows from Topeka, of like mind. There were the Gloss[5] mountains, full of bear, elk, deer, turkey and all kinds of small game. These were vague tales, for this was Indian country.

Nevertheless the two outfits joined and went on; days of travel; across the Medicine Lodge river, Driftwood creek, Salt Fork of the Arkansas, then known by its musical Osage name, Nescatunga. It was nearly dark when they reached a grove on a little stream which ran southward to the Cimarron. Beyond that were the Gloss mountains.

The grove was a turkey roost. Flocks of the great birds were moving in and flying up into the trees, huddled in black masses. Wright Spencer went for water, and came running back.

"There's bears," he panted. "Tracks—we're right in a bear's den!"

If they could kill a bear—They rushed down to the creek. Scores of tracks in the mud; not only bears but wolves and deer, coon and wildcat and turkey. And one other track, a moccasin!

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[5] This is the original name given by the white men. Better known today as *Glass*.

Robinson Crusoe's fright at the footprint on the shore was scarcely greater than theirs. But they had no stronghold to flee to. All the zest faded from their adventure. It was a heartsick and frightened group of boys that cooked supper over a tiny fire which they quickly smothered out.

The darkness was grim with menace, the shadows full of lurking danger. The snapping of a twig, the sleepy movement of a turkey in a tree, were omens of evil. They could not sleep, but lay talking in whispers; or, dozing off, would start at some real or fancied sound. "What's that?" and lie still, listening, until they could hear their own hearts beat.

Nor was it mere youthful panic. The Watcher by the Cradle walked the grove that night. And Bill was to see her face. If the maker of that moccasin print or any of his fellows came again, the scalps of all seven boys would surely hang as trophies.

Bill lay staring up, yet hardly seeing the wonderful Oklahoma sky and stars. No prophetic vision showed him the commonwealth that would arise upon these prairies. Not by any means could he foresee those who would follow their trail, nor conceive of the struggles and hardships, the triumph; aye, and the bloodshed and anguish and heartbreaks that must come with that upbuilding; nor dream of the man who should live and bear a part in it, and look back over half a century to the frightened boy who watched for dawn.

In the first grayness, Bill and John Frush went scouting up a canyon for half a mile, to a little knoll covered with plum bushes. There were bear signs . .

"Down, down!" gasped John. "My God, look at the Indians!"

Dry-mouthed and paralyzed, the two stared westward. A mile from them, half a mile beyond their camp, nearly a hundred Cheyenne Indians, men only, a war party, rode northward. If they turned aside–The two boys crouched, watching. Five minutes. It seemed an hour. Young Bill's stomach had vanished. Out of the emptiness he spoke hollowly.

"I wish we hadn't come down here, don't you, John?"

"Wishing won't help. We've got to get out of here."

The Indians held northward. The two boys slipped down the hill and dashed for the camp, where their report frightened the others equally. But Bill and John had begun to think. They set a watch on a hill near by. The rest held council. The Topeka boys had two extra saddle horses. Should they take the horses and ride? Spencer and Shepherd blamed Bill for their coming, forgetting that they were as anxious as he for the Gloss mountains. At last, hotly, he said: "Well you get on the horses and I'll walk behind with my guns and if the Indians come I'll hold them off while you escape."

But John, the level-headed, urged a better plan. They would remain in the grove till night; then send one boy ahead on a horse, two would drive the wagons, and the rest walk behind with guns ready.

What a long day of suspense! No break but the changing of guards. They dared not build a fire. They had some stewed turkey and bread, on which they made one meal in mid-afternoon.

As they finished eating, two big black bears came up through the grove and stopped, staring at these strangers. They reared up on their hind feet, sniffing curiously. The boys stared back at them. One principal object of their journey was to shoot a bear; here they were face to face, a perfect shot, and they dared not press a trigger. The bears grunted and walked off.

Long before dark the boys had the camp stuff loaded.

They fed and harnessed the horses, watching the sun creep slowly down. How slowly! As dark fell, they started. Groping by faint starlight through strange canyons, they moved on. They had come down the divide. Now it was one canyon after another. They were lost. At last, as the morning star gleamed, one of the wagons upset in a ditch.

Cold, tired, sleepy and hungry, the boys cast off caution. There was dry wood. They built a good fire, cooked breakfast, fed the horses. If there were Indians about they'd chance it. By that time it was light enough to cut poles and pry up the wagon. They had made only about eight miles in their hard night's travel. But within a mile after starting on, they came upon their own wheel tracks made coming in. They were all right then, and not much worried about Indians, though they kept two out on the saddle horses as scouts. They pushed on rapidly until they crossed the Nescatunga.

On the Ninnescah, they stopped and hunted buffalo, loading the two wagons. They sold the meat at the first town they came to, Augusta, Kansas.

They reached home with money in their pockets and a great tale of their adventures; men of experience, heroes to the girls; patronizing to the stay-at-home boys; and swaggering somewhat before their parents. The Indian scare they passed off as a joke. Of course, they said, they did not want to get in a fight and kill a lot of Indians.

But the West had set its seal on young Bill Tilghman. The next summer he once more rode westward to the buffalo range, not a lad on a hunting trip, but a young man of the frontier.

The Last Frontier

The Young Plainsman

Along the Santa Fe trail was Bill's journey, and with him went two other boys from Atchison county, Jude Bucknum and Oliver Rife. They had team and wagon, camp outfit, guns and ammunition.

Across northern Kansas now was the Kansas Pacific railroad, extending as far as Kit Carson, in Colorado. But southwest, the Trail was still the great highway. From the height of Pawnee Rock, they could see the valley of the Arkansas, the river sweeping northward in its great bend; Fort Larned thirteen miles west, later superseded by Fort Dodge; Walnut creek and the Trail crossing; the ruins of a fortified military camp known as Fort Zarah.

A thin dark line in the prairie was the Trail itself. Regular stages rolled along it; trains of freight wagons; detachments of soldiers; single carriages or horsemen. Rarely was it that some one was not in sight.

Hays and Ellsworth on the Kansas Pacific were markets for buffalo meat, shipped from there except in the hottest weather, and there was some local market. So the three young men found work. Making a camp for a week or a month, they set about the business. Killing the game was easy. But the primitive butcher work, skinning and cutting up the meat as the carcass lay on the ground, was heavy labor. They camped near the Trail for safety from Indians, who prowled in small bands.

Everywhere were the buffalo. For a hundred miles up the river from Fort Zarah, they covered the prairie. Their low grunting as they cropped the grass was like distant thunder. Sometimes they took fright and stampeded, their hoofs a Niagara of sound, with a rush as irresistible as the waters.

Hauling a load of meat to market once or twice a week, the boys made good money. They liked the free life, new experiences, the spice of danger. Labor sat lightly upon their strong young bodies, and they had the gift of laughter. As they drove to camp one evening, Oliver Rife, six feet tall and two hundred and eighty pounds of muscle, spied a lone buffalo bull.

"Watch me grab that bull by the tail and hamstring him," he said.

Bill and Jude discouraged him. "He's too old and tough for skinning," they said. Nevertheless Oliver walked up behind the bull, seized its tail and slashed at the tendons of its hind legs. Wolves would disable an animal in this way at the first attack. But Oliver's knife, sharp as it was, only cut the skin and rendered the bull savage. It turned to gore him, and he could only hang on to its tail. Bill and Jude laughed and shouted, "Jerk him off his feet!" and "Hang on, Ol. You've got him."

But Oliver cried out, "Help! shoot him. I'm played out!" As he and the bull whirled round and round, they could not shoot. Bill seized a lasso and roped the bull's horns, but this only maddened it more. Bill now had to run at the rope end and lift it over the bull's back at each turn. Jude drove the wagon near, hoping they could jump in. Around the rear axle was a log chain with a big hook. And the rope end had a strong loop. Bill ducked under and slipped the loop on the hook. The wagon almost overturned as the weight of the bull swung on it. But the team pulled stoutly, and the rope held.

Oliver let loose and fell, rolling over and over. Bill sprang for his gun, and though the bull was plunging, his first shot broke its shoulder. Another finished it. Oliver was all right by morning.

"That sure was a dern-fool trick, Ol," said Jude. "And you had to do some pretty tall jumping, too, Bill."

"Yes, he was about too much for both of us," agreed Bill. So near could death come upon the prairie; a boyish prank, an unlooked-for twist, and dark wings hovering near.

A golden autumn crept upon the plains. Flocks of wild fowl filled the sky. At daybreak they would fly out on the prairie to feed. Their clamor roused the sleepers; the gabble and quacking of the ducks, the honking of the geese, now and then the rich trumpeting of cranes. The river shallows were black with them. Slipping up on a flock of mallards in a little cove Bill fired his musket, loaded with duck shot, into the huddle and killed twenty-one. They were young and fat and, baked in the Dutch oven, made a welcome change from buffalo meat.

Quail rose from the grass in coveys, with thunderous wings. Prairie chickens boomed in the gray dawns and snipe and plover, with their high, graceful flight and soft whistling notes, haunted river and prairie.

Deer abounded in the sand hills south of the river, but as they were more trouble to shoot than buffalo and their meat brought no more, the hunters seldom tried to kill them. In the creek valleys away from the Trail, herds of wild horses grazed.

Coyotes and gray wolves followed the buffalo herds, watching for weak animals or a straying calf. Along the streams were other fur bearers; otter, mink, muskrat, beaver. Two years later six hundred beaver were taken along the Arkansas in the fifty miles above Fort Dodge. There were some 'possum and raccoon; and on the prairie, badger, prairie dogs and rabbits innumerable. The big jackrabbits, unknown further east, cocked their black-tipped ears and bounded off, now and then tilting one long ear back derisively. They did not bother to extend themselves unless danger seemed near.

Sunfish and perch, catfish and bass were in the creeks. Bill was a devoted fisherman, but since the days were so full, he usually set lines at night.

The trees were nearly leafless now, and the white hoar frost lay heavy in the mornings. November was nearly gone. The buffalo, too, had moved southward. The boys rode horseback far and wide, to spot a herd for killing. Yet just across the river they could see long lines of them, hundreds, coming down to drink. Over there was forbidden, Indian country, as the government had agreed by treaty with the Indians, and any man ventured at his peril. The three looked and were tempted.

They crossed the river. Here were sand hills, affording concealment, instead of the wide bottoms. By the same token, the Indians might slip up the more easily. But one boy kept a lookout from a hilltop, all the time. The first morning they killed eleven cows, seven of them prime fat beef, the others old and tough. These four, they merely skinned and cut out the tongues.

If the Indians attacked it would be at daybreak, for a surprise, and also because they feared ghosts and spirits abroad in the darkness. Bill and Oliver stood the first two night watches, without incident. But in the early dawn, Jude Bucknum came running back.

"Get up boys! I believe the Indians are coming."

They popped up like jack-in-a-box, jerking on boots, seizing their guns.

"What did you see, Jude?"

"The buffalo up the river a ways were running back in the hills. Then I sky-lighted a man on a horse."

They were up on the little knoll where he had stood guard, crouching in the plum bushes. The light grew.

"There, see!" Down on the sandbar in the river, single file, rode seven Indians. They stopped, bunching up, and pointed toward the camp.

"They're planning how to make the attack," muttered Jude.

"Take a shot at them, Bill," urged Oliver.

The rifle, with its heavy charge for buffalo, boomed like a cannon in the stillness of the frosty morning. The blue smoke curled around them. Down on the sandbar, the little knot of horsemen split up like an exploding bean pod. The riders went streaking for the hills, and vanished.

A flock of ducks settled on the water, and a dozen cranes waded in the shallows.

"I guess they're gone, all right," said Oliver.

"But they'll be back," added Bill. "Did you bring the field glass?"

A strong single-barrel telescope – for binoculars were not made yet – was a useful part of their equipment. Oliver hurried to get it. Climbing a tall cottonwood, he set the glass to his eye.

"Bill," he called in excitement, "you've killed an Indian! And a horse. They're lying down on that sandbar."

Looking in all directions he found the coast clear, and the three dashed down to the river. There was a pony, shot dead. But what Oliver took for the Indian proved to be merely a fine red blanket. Bill obtained a good Indian saddle and a braided rawhide lariat from the pony. The blanket he kept until the year 1878, when Dull Knife's raiding band burned all his possessions.

Secretly he was glad he had not killed the Indian. But at least he had routed the enemy, and rated as a real Indian fighter.

"You just as good as shot him anyway," declared Jude Bucknum.

Not waiting for breakfast, they hurriedly loaded their wagon. The Indians, they knew, would be back. But in the main channel, near the north shore, the wagon stuck in the quicksand. The water was belly deep with a skim of ice upon it. They unhitched the horses and led them out. Then, wading, they had to carry out all the load. It was a cold, hard job; and at any moment a war party might appear.

The wagon emptied, they tied a rope to the tongue, and the horses, on solid ground, easily pulled it out. Then they had the job of reloading. It was mid-day when they reached the camp they had left three days before. They built a fire, dried their clothes and cooked dinner. Then they decided to push on to market their meat.

They discarded all but about a ton of the best meat, and set out, camping that night at Walnut creek. With morning, came a drizzling rain, though not cold. They walked because of the heavy load on the wagon, and after fifteen miles, when they reached Cow creek, they were wet to the skin. Here they met four other wagons loaded with meat. Crossing the creek, they crawled slowly up the hill. A tall, bearded man in front suddenly turned and shouted, "Look at that prairie fire!"

"No prairie fire in this rain," said Bill, wondering. Off to the northwest loomed a mass of darkness, rolling and billowing along the ground. It must be a fire. Yet there were no flames, no red glow within its writhing darkness, no hot blast. Even as they looked and wondered, the great blizzard was upon them.

In three minutes their wet clothes were frozen stiff. Icy sleet and snow, driven by a sixty-mile gale, cut their faces. Bloody icicles formed upon their chins and on the noses of the horses. The daylight was murky and snow filled the air. They groped blindly, and must have lost their way and perished but for one thing. From the bare, hard surface of the Trail the fierce gale whipped off the snow as fast as it fell. Bill walked before the team to trace the path, and they battled on. The nearest shelter was the Plum Creek ranch, eight miles away. The other outfits unhitched and left their wagons.

But the three Atchison boys kept on for some three miles. Then one of the team gave out. They roped blankets about her and left her on the south side of the wagon. The rest of their bedding and guns and clothes, they packed on the other horse.

The next five miles was a battle with death, but at last they staggered into the ranch. Seventy men huddled about the red-hot stove that night. Beds, or rather sleeping space, was a problem. The whole floor was not big enough. A bin of shelled corn fell to the boys' lot, and Bill as the smallest, slept in the middle. This was good, for he slept warm.

All night and next day and the second night the storm raged, one of the worst Bill was ever to know in that region. The third day dawned clear, two feet of snow on the ground, and a temperature ten degrees below zero.

Bill and his partners roped blankets about them as well as their overcoats, tied shirts on their heads to protect ears and faces, and set out to look for their wagon and horse. The wagon stood where they had left it, though the canvas cover was torn to shreds. Nothing moved in all the wide expanse of snow. But a hundred yards to the south, a hummock in the smoothness, lay the frozen carcass of the mare. They took off the blankets and left her.

Another storm-bound hunter loaned them a horse to bring their wagon in. Then Bill set out on foot for the claim of George Rust, an Atchison county boy, seven miles south of Ellsworth. It was a hard tramp of forty-five miles through the snow, though the weather had moderated somewhat.

Rust loaned him a mule with which they hauled their load of frozen meat to Ellsworth and sold it. Oliver and Jude took the train for Atchison. But Bill stayed with George Rust.

Bill Meets A Jockey

George Rust had a good claim with a creek and some timber; had built a dugout and other improvements. Bill helped him enlarge the dugout horse shed, and they settled for the winter.

Profitable work was at hand. Texas cattle driven north and turned out upon the range had perished by hundreds in that terrible blizzard. Bill and George skinned them, the hides bringing five cents a pound. They averaged sixty to eighty pounds, but a large one weighing one hundred pounds would bring five dollars.

Wolf hides too brought money; and they got about three hundred that winter; fifty cents for coyotes, three dollars for the large wolves. Poison was the easiest way to take them. Wild turkeys brought fifty to seventy-five cents. Bill became an expert turkey picker. Thus they made good money that winter.

In Ellsworth one day, Bill discovered a lady who sold pies. He traded her two turkeys for five mince pies, and started home carrying them in his hand, wrapped in a newspaper. His pony was gentle, and he let the reins loose. But as a rabbit dashed under its nose, the startled horse began to pitch. It did not unseat Bill, but with a few jumps the saddle girth broke, and off he went. The pies were a jumbled mess. Should he throw them away? He picked out a broken bit and ate it; and another. He did not tell George about the pies, and his friend was really worried when Bill could not eat supper. He said he was not hungry, but George feared he had been hurt in his fall. However they both enjoyed many pies from the Ellsworth lady that winter.

One other mishap more serious and painful marked this winter. A dealer hired Bill to break some wild horses. Among them was a fine pacing mare, handsome and spirited. Bill rode her till she was tired out and went along tractably. Riding beside George Rust, talking, Bill was paying little attention to the mare, when, with a sudden gathering of strength, she plunged and threw him over her head, reared, and struck him. Rust spurred his horse against her. But she had brought her forefeet down on Bill's back, causing a bad injury. For six weeks he lay in bed, part of the time unable to turn himself.

Two weeks after he was up, he rode the mare again. She was docile at last, but her spirit was broken too, and she was a dull, hard-gaited saddler, instead of the prize they had counted on.

Horse racing was the one sport at Ellsworth. In a country where a horse was a primary factor in living, everybody was interested, and the owner of a fast one respected. Not a few kept a race horse. Others were proud of a fine saddle horse and not averse to trying his speed against some other man's pride. Even those who possessed only a stout work team were – in their own estimation at least – judges of horse flesh, and ready to back their judgment. They would bet from a plug of tobacco up to ten or twenty-five dollars. Bookmakers were unknown. Stakes of a race were from twenty-five to one hundred dollars.

There was no track; only a grassy flat near town.

All races were matched; distances, a quarter, six hundred yards, half a mile.

The horses had no special care or training except for starting. They were ridden a little way up the track in the wrong direction, turned, and came back running. If the starter found them even, he yelled "Go!" If not, they tried again.

A few had racing saddles. Others used their ordinary saddles. Some rode barebacked or with a saddle blanket held by a surcingle. Riders were sometimes the owners, but more commonly catch–"ketch" they called it–meaning that each owner secured the best and lightest rider he could "ketch." Frequently the riders "dressed" by stripping off boots and outer garments. Long drawers and undershirt, of red flannel or white cotton, were fashionable jockey suits.

On a saturday, Bill had taken a horse to get it shod. As the blacksmith finished the job, a voice addressed the young plainsman.

"Mister, will you let me ride your horse out to the track?"

Bill turned and looked at the speaker, a thin, eager boy of perhaps fourteen, with big dark eyes, clad in the usual flannel shirt and jeans. But he wore moccasins, and his face was darkly brown, with high cheek bones.

"I'll keep right with you, and bring him back," he added pleadingly.

"Oh, all right," said Bill, tossing over the halter rope.

There were four races that afternoon, and everybody in Ellsworth was stringing out to the track. The boy skinned up with the agility of a monkey. Mounted, he-was one with his horse, his thin legs clasping its body, his seat erect and easy. Bill swung on his own horse.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Charlie. I just come."

Bill had a hunch. As they passed the pie shop, he bought an apple pie. Breaking it he handed the larger piece to Charlie. The boy's eyes glowed. He vouchsafed another bit of history.

"I quit the wagon train this morning before breakfast. The boss wouldn't pay me. Nothing to eat since last night." The pie disposed of, he edged his mount closer.

"I can ride races," he said.

At the track Bill became separated from Charlie. He met Peacock, owner of the Plum Creek ranch, whom he had not seen since the great blizzard. As they talked, there was a sudden commotion and, running with the crowd, they saw a small fellow on the ground, doubled up and gasping. A horse had kicked him in the stomach.

"I'm all right," he said, feebly. "But," he added, "I guess I can't ride that race."

A big, bearded man, holding his arm, let go.

"Thunderation!" he said. He stood, looking helpless, for a moment. Then, "Where will I get a rider?"

Bill spoke up. "There's an Indian boy came out with me. Half or quarter blood maybe. Says he can ride."

"Where is he?"

Charlie showed at once that he could ride. He had the same mastery of the dancing racer as of the quiet pony, in spite of his mere eighty pounds. Though he rode with only a blanket, he stuck like a burr as his mount made the lightning whirl to start. Charlie's services were thenceforth in demand. He visited the dugout and became Bill's devoted friend. But the frontier was pushing west and Bill followed.

Charlie went east as far as Topeka, where Bill met him occasionally on his own trips. Then it was Washington; representative – speaker – Senator Charles Curtis of Kansas, vice-president in time to be.

Bill in those later years went often to Washington. And Charlie welcomed his old friend. They talked of races and old times and politics. He was taller now, his skinny body had broadened. The coarse clothes of the frontier were replaced by the finest product of looms and tailors. But the dark Indian eyes were the same; the old friendship. They ate together in the senate dining room. Charlie scanned the menu handed him by an obsequious waiter.

"Pie," he said. "But none of it ever tastes so good as that apple pie you bought me at Ellsworth, Bill."

With the New Frontier

Spring awakened on the plains, and the railroad was building. The grant of land to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe was conditional on the road being completed to the Colorado line by january 1, 1873. Hence, in that summer of 1872 the work was rushed. A contractor by the name of Atchison had the section between Hutchinson and Fort Dodge.

Bill and George Rust secured the meat contract for Atchison's grading camp, and established themselves on Sawlog creek about twenty miles northeast of Fort Dodge. Each week they delivered from three to four thousand pounds of prime meat, killing forty or fifty cow buffaloes. Bull meat was apt to be tough, and brought complaints.

Near the Arkansas river, a freighter named Nixon had a long adobe building where he kept shelled corn for sale; a needed commodity for horses doing work. At midsummer, june 22, Bill and Rust went to buy some. That day, too, a crew of surveyors arrived from Hays City to lay out a new town. Thus Bill saw the actual beginning of Dodge City. In september the rails were laid that far, the work engine steamed in, and Dodge City had embarked on her colorful career.

Quaequae ipse miserrima vidi, et pars magna fui.

So Bill, like Aeneas, saw that history, and was no mean part in its making; a history fortunate for some, and for some *miserrima.*

The graders' camp closed and the young men's meat contract was ended. But the railroad had brought a new business. There was sale for buffalo hides. It was an easy transition. In killing for meat they had wrapped the hides about the quarters, to keep it clean. Now the hides were saved and sold, and the meat became secondary.

But hundreds of other men thrown out of work also became hide hunters. Guns boomed from morning till night. The slaughter of the buffalo was on.

Though the smoke of trains wavered up through the clear air two or three times a day, the varied traffic of the Santa Fe trail showed no decline. Small bands of Indians crossed the river, watching for a chance of plunder. One night men from the nearest camp reported a man missing. The Indians must have got him. But in the morning they found the man, fearfully gored by a buffalo bull which he had wounded. The Indian scare had been a false alarm, and the man recovered.

But one morning the two awoke with the smell of smoke in their nostrils, the pungent fragrance of burning grass. As the sun rose, the blue haze showed as far as they could see. It must be a big prairie fire, they said, and kept near camp that day. No flames appeared, and the smoke diminished. The third day it was gone.

The buffalo were gone too! Their business had literally vanished in smoke. With two days of riding, they learned the situation. The Indians, slipping through in numerous small bands, had fired the country for a hundred miles north of the Arkansas river, and from Walnut creek west–the whole northern portion of the buffalo range. The herds were driven southward, vanished, as far as the hunters were concerned.

Bill and George Rust hired extra teams to freight their hides to Dodge City. Here, where four months before they had watched the surveyors setting stakes in the virgin prairie, was now a rip-roaring boom town. Dance halls, saloons, and gambling places were running full blast, never closed. Railroad graders, bull whackers, traders, Mexicans, buffalo hunters, emigrants, soldiers, thronged the streets. Any drink or a cigar was twenty-five cents. Nickels and dimes were disregarded. Twenty-five cents for a hair-cut or a shave, or to drive a nail in a horse's shoe.

George Rust had known like scenes at Ellsworth, but to Bill they were new. However, under George's guidance he was quickly acclimated. He liked to dance. He tried his hand at the gambling games with indifferent success. Men offered him drinks. He refused politely when he could; or would order a "soft" drink. He would buy drinks in his turn as a courtesy. But gradually it became known that young Bill Tilghman did not drink. This was a freak and a curiosity in that time and place. He gave no reason. No word passed his lips of his family experience with drink, or the resolve he had made then.

Men accepted him, finding him a man's man for all that, able to hold his own in town and camp, in word and deed; soft spoken, quiet, kindly, but with ready wit and laughter. Slim and youthful and inoffensive as he was, there was that in his gray-blue eyes which gave men pause, and few cared to push it to the test.

"Where are the buffalo? Where is the big herd?" the idle hunters asked anxiously.

"Up the river in Colorado," came the word at last. Bill and Rust bought a second wagon and team of mules, hired two skinners and set out. They found scattering herds wherever there was grass. More could be seen across the river, but Indians were there, too. They were not ready to risk their scalps for a few hides.

They went on past Big Sandy creek in Colorado, and up north of Fort Lyon where the wild little town of Kit Carson had sprung up at the terminus of the Kansas Pacific. Until the railroad built on to Denver, it enjoyed a brief period of importance. It had dance halls and saloons like Dodge City.

The big warehouse of Mark Bedell, hide buyer, was the hunters' headquarters. Hunters could spread their blankets on the piles of hides and sleep, without charge. That winter he handled a quarter of a million hides. He employed fourteen men, and kept a big eating hall for them. Here too, hunters were welcome for fifty cents a meal.

Bedell's cook was a slight, dark-eyed young fellow of about Bill's age, who spoke with a German accent, though his forbears had been in America for several generations—Pennsylvania Dutch. Few knew him by his name of Born, but only as Dutch Henry.

Bill liked him, often helped him with the stacks of tin dishes. Henry's cooking was rated the best in town, and he kept his crude kitchen "as clean as any kitchen heifer." His day began at four o'clock, often lasting until ten at night.

To Bill he confided his plans and hopes. He would not always be Bedell's cook. There was a girl back in Michigan. He had already filed on a claim in Kansas—Bill remembered the bunch of letters from Mollie Prather, back in George Rust's dugout.

Bill and George Rust made themselves a lodge of poles and buffalo skins, Indian fashion, except that the hides were not tanned. The raw hides dried into place, making the tent tight and windproof. With a small fire in the center it was snug and comfortable. And in the smoke they dried buffalo tongues, all that they took. There was little work in salting and hanging them, and the cured tongues sold for twenty-five cents apiece. They used many themselves, for smoked tongue was a delicious and handy lunch, carried in their saddle bags. Their main camp was near the river, but they had a "dry camp," out on the prairie, where they did much of their work, killing, skinning, and pegging out the hides to dry.

Henry, the cook, had saved money enough to buy a team and outfit. He hired a helper and became a hide hunter. By next winter, he could go back for the girl.

A party of Cheyennes raided his camp, wounded his helper and ran off his horses. He walked to Bill's camp, and Bill hurried with his wagon to take the wounded man to town. Henry took his guns and set off afoot after the Indians and his horses.

The fifth morning, as he cooked a bit of meat, the Indians found him. An arrow hit him in the leg, but he stood them off all day, and escaped at night. He made his way to Fort Lyon, reported his loss and asked for the loan of a team to bring his hides in. The commander simply told him to get out, even threatened to arrest him. No offer of medical aid. Henry spent the day in the brush by the river.

Next morning, a span of mules was missing from the Fort, also the commandant's best saddle horse. He cursed the Indians. But five days later he received a letter.

"Do not blame the Indians or any one else," it ran. "For I alone stole your mules. After I hauled my hides, I sold them. I'm keeping the horse for he is a fine saddler. If you want him just come down in the

Cheyenne country. I'm going there to collect one hundred Indian ponies and one scalp." It was signed Dutch Henry.

From that day, for some ten years, the name echoed throughout the Southwest. Exaggerated gossip said he had a band of one hundred men.

"Henry never had a band," said Bill. "He played a lone hand, and he specialized in Indian ponies and government mules. The number of these he collected is known only to God and him. Maybe he lost count himself. But no one ever knew him to steal from a white man."

Fifty-two years later Bill wrote: "In spite of his crimes, a truer man and better pal never lived. He had a heart as big as any government mule he ever appropriated. In my fifty years as a peace officer, I have heard many tales and sob stories of outlaws driven to a life of crime. But Dutch Henry's is the only one I ever knew to hold water."

That Henry never lost caste with the plainsmen, who held a horse-thief lowest of the low, is evidenced by the fact that he was one of the little band of hunters who stood off the Indians in the battle of Adobe Walls, in 1874.

Hardy as they were with their outdoor life, Bill took pneumonia. George Rust nursed him, but scarcely was he up again when Rust fell ill. Bill watched with him alone in the tepee. There was so little he could do. In the intervals of fever, the sick boy talked of their boyhood in Atchison county. They were boys yet, nineteen and twenty, although two-year veterans of the plains. Death that they had sometimes challenged recklessly, that had passed them by so often with storm and wild beasts and savage men, stopped now. Bill closed his friend's eyes, and huddled down by the fireside, heartsick with an awful desolation; for the first time alone with the great mystery.

George's folks at home were good church people. It would be added grief to his mother, Bill knew, if her boy were laid away with the rough prairie burial. He lifted George's body into the wagon, tucking the blankets over it with useless tenderness. There was a cemetery and a preacher at Fort Lyon, which he reached at nightfall. Here the commandant gave him shelter for the night; sold him a plain coffin such as they had for the army. And next morning, the chaplain conducted the simple funeral in the cemetery of the fort.

Bill sold their hides and outfit, sending George's share home to his folks. Then he set out for Dodge City.

Dodge City and the Buffalo Range

Dodge City. There were other towns on the plains, others along the line of the Santa Fe, near army posts, other cow towns. Yet Dodge City, "Wicked Dodge," as with some strange alembic, alone made of these varied elements a potent unity, attained an unique preeminence, and built an enduring legend, famous, infamous, glamorous.

Set squarely on the one hundredth meridian, it was the remotest corner of the Louisiana Purchase. A mile to the west, a mile to the south across the river, would have been alien soil; Spain, Mexico, Texas. Here the name of Coronado Crossing kept the memory of the first white man to set foot upon the plains. And the great river, mountain-born, now winding and sprawling in its sandy bed, or full with the melting snows, remembered how he passed through its waters, and gave it a holy name, "St. Peter and St. Paul." Here a trail led southwestward, one route to Santa Fe; and the main trail, highway of commerce and empire followed along the river for many a mile. So, too, the railroad, with new power and new tempo, kept to the smooth path of the river.

The city. A handful of wooden buildings set in the immensity of the plains. A thousand miles northward these stretched into the Dakotas, where the rivers flowed toward the polar sea; southward a thousand miles through the arid spaces of the Llano Estacado and on to the plateau of Mexico. Fierce and terrible storms blew from the Arctic to the Rio Grande. Hot winds and scorching suns burned in summer. Yet over them the miracle of grass spread forever, and upon them fed the wild herds, in hundred thousands. Rains fell with saving sweetness.

But in Dodge City, men sought escape from the vastness and loneliness, disporting themselves by the hot light of kerosene lamps, and uplifting their spirits with other spirits out of kegs and bottles.

"Half the population," wrote Bill, "were gamblers or prostitutes." The latter, he noted, "were painted up like a present-day respectable woman, and looked mighty pretty in their satins and laces." They and the gamblers made a point of being fashionably dressed, though their customers wore their plainsmen's garb, only freshened by a shave and a clean shirt.

Avidly they plunged into the amusements of the dance halls and gambling games. They listened to the music with ears too long attuned to the light whispers of the prairie winds, the monotonous grunting of the buffalo as they cropped the grass, the cry of the coyotes at night. The musicians were good, the house could afford to pay. The square rosewood piano made Bill think of Josie and Hattie at home.

Truculent men, bullies, men inflamed with drink, or by gambling losses, quarreled. There were fights and shootings. The little eminence north of town had twenty-five graves in the first year, and the expressive name of Boot Hill. The place was lawless yet, but in july, Ford county would be organized and Charlie Bassett made its first sheriff.

Though whoopee was an important business in Dodge, and the most spectacular, it was not the vital business of the town. From here, as the end of rail, spread fan-like the traffic of the plains. Stage coaches and freight wagons continued the trail to Santa Fe, and all over the buffalo country, hunters' outfits hauled supplies, and brought their wagons in, piled high with meat and hides. Soldiers and military supplies were distributed from here over the great southwest.

The daily passenger train came wheeling grandly – its pot-topped smokestack streaming smoke – to the little station beneath the tall red water tank. Side tracks were daily filled with freight cars, loading and unloading.

There were several mercantile firms in Dodge City[6] buying hides. The largest, Rath and Wright, in the winter of 1872-3, shipped 200,000 hides. Other firms together, shipped as many more, as well as two hundred carloads of buffalo meat, and twenty carloads of buffalo tongues.

Still keenly missing his partner George Rust, Bill spent a week at Dodge City. He learned that Charlie Roudebush, also from Atchison, was at Great Bend, eighty-two miles eastward. He made this in a two-day ride. Roudebush readily quit his job with a feed dealer to become a partner with Bill. They had to buy a team and complete outfit. But Bill took time to ride over to George Rust's dugout near Ellsworth, "for some important papers"; these being a dozen letters from the girl back home. The dugout was doubly desolate as he remembered its owner who would come no more. He found some comfort in reading over Mollie's letters, and wrote her from Great Bend. But the correspondence gradually ceased. A boy's love was not strong enough to call him back from the frontier, and she too found another attachment.

Charlie was ready by the time he returned and, hiring a man named Ed Robertson as helper, they set out for the buffalo plains. Nor had they far to go. Twenty miles south was a low flat, a shallow lake in wet weather, and called Big lake or Dry lake. The buffalo were there. The men's endurance was the only limit. In ten days they had two hundred hides staked out to dry. Then, suddenly, in the night, the buffalo were gone. Roudebush hauled the hides to Great Bend while Bill rode to look for a new location.

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[6] Wright (Robert M.) *Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital,* privately printed, 1913, p. 76.

They crossed Medicine Lodge creek and camped on a nameless stream. To Bill, as the best shot, fell the work of killing. The others shared the labor of the camp, and followed him to skin. Bill also helped when he had his day's quota. Thirty-five hides made a full task for the three. It was hard, heavy work, but it paid well.

However, they met a big loss here. When the buffalo again moved, the men had fourteen hundred hides which they ricked up until they could haul them. Some weeks later, they found them ruined with moths, a menace which, since the hide business was in its first warm season, no one knew about. Not more than sixty out of the fourteen hundred were salable. Many others suffered like losses. They learned to sprinkle the hair with arsenic water, carrying a barrel of it in their wagons.

Two cowboys riding through, told them that the buffalo were in thousands about their old camp, Dry lake. Leaving Robertson to stack the hides, Bill and Roudebush drove there, finding the country black with buffalo. But instead of the peaceful, stolid animals, each intent on gathering grass, they found a new restlessness, a constant moving, and the bulls' bellows shook the air. They bawled challenge and engaged in fights. They paid no attention to the wagon, sometimes not even getting out of the way, until Bill, on his saddle horse, lashed them with a rope end. It was rutting season.

The two were wakened three times in the night by bulls fighting so near that they must chase them off. Roudebush shot in the dark, and killed a big one which they skinned in the morning. The madness of the buffalo increased. The lowing of the bulls was like rumbling thunder. Near at hand could be heard the sharp clash of horns, the heavy thud as two shaggy foreheads met, the pounding of hoofs as the adversaries charged each other. Now and then came the thinner notes of the cows.

At daylight, Bill went out and shot one cow and thirty-five bulls from a single "stand." Roudebush was on hand with the wagon, and the two skinned and hauled and pegged out the thirty-six hides that day. It was after dark when they finished. They made plans for a harvest. Roudebush was to ride to Great Bend and hire four skinners, while Bill moved their camp. They would kill one hundred buffalo a day.

Bill woke with a sense of strangeness. The first streaks of dawn were in the sky and the world was filled with silence. In the full light, there was not a buffalo in sight. The two jumped on their horses and rode to the nearest hill. Far and wide they gazed over the country, broad valleys and low rolling hills, smooth, green – and empty. Not anywhere the black dot of a single buffalo. The herd had moved off in the night, how far they could not tell. But southwest, they knew, for in that direction the wolves were traveling. The wide valley was full of them, thousands moving at a slow, steady trot. They were ranked so closely that the sunlight, glinting upon their backs, gave the appearance of the gleam from flowing water. The three men hunted however, with good success through the summer.

For the winter, Bill and Roudebush had new partners: Bill's brother Dick, with his brother-in-law, Jim Elder, and Wright Spencer, the cousin from Maryland. These and five other men made up a big outfit.

While Bill was in Colorado the previous winter, hunters had begun to venture south of the Arkansas, and though the Indians sometimes ran off their horses, no one had been killed. Brick Bond had set up the biggest outfit with twenty wagons, and he had killed ten thousand buffalo along Kiowa creek southward from Dodge City. Bill, riding that way, had to pick his way through the thick-strewn carcasses. Bond kept daily records of hides, and of the sales.

Bill's outfit chose a camp site some fifty miles southeast of Dodge City, near the junction of Bluff creek and Kiowa. Here they built a dugout to house twelve men, a large dugout shed for their horses, and a still larger closed dugout for a "dry-house." Unknowingly, they were building a legend, which would give name to a Kansas town. The buffalo passed, the cattlemen held the country, and at last settlers came. They saw the crumbling ruins of the old dugouts. But who built them, and why were they so large? Some one found an explanation. This was a fort, built by cowboys and earlier settlers, as a place to gather and fight off the Indians. They called it "Fort Protection." And when the railroad was built through, the station and town near by received the name "Protection."[7]

Buffalo were plenty, but already there were cattle-men,[8] hunters and some settlers in the region, all killing them. As they became scarce, Bill's outfit made several side camps. These were on Elm and Anderson creeks, tributaries of the Cimarron; and one in Kansas in a Red canyon running down to the Nescatunga. They built small dugouts at each place, and named the creeks as they are today: Elm creek for its elm trees; Indian creek from the number of Indian tree burials along it. Anderson was named for Bill Anderson[9] who had a camp there, and from whom Bill recovered the stolen oxen as his first official work.

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[7] In june, 1924, on his way to attend the fiftieth anniversary ceremonies for the battle of Adobe Walls, Bill drove through this region, trying to locate the sites of his old camps. Asking about roads at the town of Protection, he learned this story.

In the early fall, they worked from their Kiowa creek camp, filling the dry house with meat, skinning hides and poisoning wolves. Later they made a side camp with a tent, about eight miles north. In mid-december, Bill and five others were working here. They had noticed no "weather signs." But one night the tent whipped off with the crack of a cannon, and suddenly they were immersed in the biting cold of a norther. They shouted to one another and their voices were lost in the sweeping thunder of the wind. A man could not stand against it. They huddled together, trying to hold their bedding down. Yet they would freeze if they stayed. The dugout lay south; they had only to run before the wind. If they held out, they would hit Bluff creek, and the shelter of its banks, so they might reach camp. They paired off, two men wrapping a blanket about their heads and shoulders, and each holding one end of it, their inward arms linked. Unwittingly, they had made a sail. The wind smashed against them. They could only run to keep their feet, rushing blindly in darkness. Their feet moved mechanically. The breath in their mouths was ice, a stabbing pain in the lungs. Faces and hands were past feeling. Death raced beside them. But, strangely, all six came through.

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[8] Barton Brothers brought the first herd of Texas cattle to range here in 1872, driving up the Pecos river into New Mexico and along the Santa Fe Trail, to avoid the Indian country. Their headquarters was at the site of Pierceville. Other cattle were ranging east of Dodge City. – Blanchard (Leola Howard) *Conquest of Southwest Kansas,* privately printed, 1931, p. 45.

[9] This Bill Anderson bore the same name as the next-in-command under the . . to Kansans . . infamous Quantrill, the Civil War guerilla. "He was not really Quantrill's man," says Bill's notebook, "but he was a tough, bullying sort, who liked to foster that belief, and with a few drinks he would swagger about declaring boastfully, 'I'm Bill Anderson, I am.'"

Bill and Jim Elder, staggering down a little hill, came hard against a tree, and resting a moment, heard a horse blowing and sneezing.

"Jim, Jim!" Bill shouted. "That's Old Dandy! We're right there."

They had indeed come squarely upon the dugout, falling down the first bank to the bench on which it was built. One other pair struck the creek within a quarter of a mile, and soon made their way in. The others, two miles away, were sheltered by the creek bank and timber, and at last reached home.

Once more Bill had walked with Danger and seen the face of Death.

After that, they worked southward. Several men always stayed at Kiowa creek. Bill, with Jim Elder and Bill Martin—known as Hurricane Bill—hunted and traded with the Indians, with whom they made friends.[10] Of Hurricane Bill, who was known as a hard drinker but a faithful partner, Bill said, "He was the wildest man I ever knew."

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[10] This had its beginning in the summer just past, 1873, while Bill and Roudebush and Ed Robertson were encamped upon a nameless creek southeast of Dodge City.

Indians

Flat in the grass, Bill was "bellying up" to a bunch of buffalo. He carried his big buffalo gun, the Sharp's rifle; his "rest stick," which, crossed in an X with the ramrod, would support the gun. One belt held his Colt forty-five, with cartridges, and his skinning knife, and a second was filled with rifle cartridges. Thus burdened, he edged along.

Suddenly, not more than eighteen inches from his face, rose the big flat head and sinister eyes of a rattlesnake. The sharp whirr of its rattle sounded. It struck. But quick as the snake's striking, Bill ducked his head aside. The strike, aimed for his face, missed, the extended length of the snake's body falling upon his shoulder. Before the reptile could wriggle off and recoil itself, he too, wriggled aside and sprang to his feet. His revolver leaped from its scabbard. The snake's head vanished. There was only a writhing mass upon the ground, its end a bloody pulp. The blue smoke of the revolver drifted away.

Relaxing, Bill drew a long breath. Then his throat cramped as he heard a ripple of strange laughter. He turned. Ten feet behind him, on their ponies, sat five Cheyenne Indians! His first face-to-face encounter, and he alone, a trespasser south of the Arkansas river. The Watcher by the Cradle must have laughed too. She was dealing him double measure.

But their laughter, it proved, was good natured.

They crossed their breasts, smiled, and said "chuck-away!"

Bill smiled too, and pointed toward his camp. He would be glad to feed them, very glad.

But the Indians, too, were interested in the snake. They rode close and looked down at it, a big one, four feet long, and as large as a man's arm. "Poweh, poweh!"–"good"–they said. One of them jerked a wisp of hair from his pony's tail, tied a loop about the snake and dragged it to the camp. While Bill hastened to cook them a big meal, he skinned it and rolled up the skin to carry home.

They were very friendly, and disposed of a huge pot of buffalo meat, with bread, molasses, and coffee. On leaving, they invited the white men to come and eat at their camp, over south.

"The creek where Bill killed the big rattler," his own party, and from them, other hunters, referred to it. Soon the phrase was shortened to "Rattlesnake creek." The name remains today.

That fall, when Bill and his partners were established at their dugouts on Kiowa creek, he returned the visit of these Cheyennes, and being well received, the hunters felt safe in making the sub-camps to the south. So at last he came to the Gloss mountains, the goal of his first youthful expedition.

South of the Cimarron river, high and white, they stood, shining with a peculiar glitter, which was the reason for their name. Large masses of selenite, a crystalline gypsum, lay in broken flakes which reflected the sunlight with a gleam that could be seen miles away.

As a game country, the mountains bore out all the tales Bill had heard. They covered no great area but in their canyons, and in others running down to the

Cimarron, game of all kinds abounded. Deer trails were deep beaten paths. Wild turkeys ranged in great flocks. Bill saw logs of red cedar eight inches thick lying across paths where the turkeys went, and these cedar logs cut more than half through by the wear of their feet. Farther down the Cimarron river near the present site of the city of Kingfisher, Oklahoma, he counted seventy-six elk, in a single herd. Buffalo, antelope, bear and wolves were plentiful; panthers or cougars seen occasionally. This region was a natural wintering place. Grass was thick, dry-cured, the timbered creeks and canyons afforded shelter, and snow seldom lay on the ground.

Bill and his brother Dick built a dugout at Horseshoe bend, on Elm creek. As they were skinning their first buffalo, twenty Indians rode up. They had good horses, their faces were painted, their dress clean and handsome. They all dismounted and shook hands, and the leader handed Bill a letter.

"The bearer, Little Robe, chief of the Cheyenne, is a good Indian. He has been to Washington and is a friend of the government. He has authority to arrest any white hunters found trespassing in the Indian territory, and to deliver them to the commanding officer at Fort Supply."

Dick read it over his shoulder. Bill glanced up. One Indian had seized a rifle, another their knives and steel.

"That's our gun. Take it away from him!" he snapped. He stepped before the Indian who held the knives, motioning for them. The Indian shook his head and pointed to the letter. Bill's fist drew back. In his eyes was the gleam that would make bad men, in later days, drop their guns. The steel-sharp knives were deadly weapons; but the Indian's eyes flickered to the drawn fist, and again to Bill's face. It was all done in three seconds. The Indian dropped the knives, crossing his breast in sign of friendship.

Bill swept them up with his right hand. Half turning, he saw Dick and his Indian struggling for the rifle. Bill's left hand flew to his revolver, and with a snap of the wrist, it pointed at Dick's opponent. He let go the rifle and stepped back.

After that, the meeting was amicable. The boys fed the visitors, talked with Little Robe, and they parted good friends.

Bill and his partners camped all that winter in the Cheyenne country, hunting and trading. They bartered for more buffalo robes than they took. Most of their work was poisoning wolves, whose skins brought good money.

Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Kiowas were encamped in this region. Osages came from farther east bringing horses to race and trade. "There was high gambling, and the Osages generally took home more than they brought," he said.

Although they had guns and knives and axes, cooking pots, tin plates and calico from the whites, the plains Indians had not changed their manner of life. They considered their own people and ways vastly superior to the white.

The Indians returned their visits. Frequent guests were Little Robe, the head chief, Little Bear, war chief, Kicking Bird and White Deer of the Kiowas, and Roman Nose, a Cheyenne. Hurricane Bill spoke Cheyenne, and was expert on sign talk.

The Indians always fed their guests, and they expected to be fed when visiting. So whenever any arrived, Bill or Hurricane would fill up their biggest kettle with meat. They did not have to serve it; just give the Indians tin plates and let them help themselves. However, in camp, the women waited on visitors. The Indians did not care much for bread, but liked meat and coffee, and were especially fond of sweets, sugar and molasses. The boys would often give them an onion, for the fun of watching them. They would smell it, bite it, pass it around, grin and jabber over it, often put it in their pouch to show the folks.

Hurricane boasted a great deal to the Indians of Bill's shooting, and on New Year's day, 1874, Chief Little Bear, and the Cheyenne, Roman Nose, asked for a demonstration. It was a clear, bright winter morning. Two buffalo bulls appeared on a hill off from camp, and the four men walked out to a little rise for a good view. Here Bill, using his Sharps' rifle and rest sticks, tried his prowess. His first three shots fell short. But with the fourth, he got the range, the bullet passed through one bull's body, kicking up the dirt beyond.

The two Indians put their hands over their mouths in astonishment. "Poweh!" they said "Good, good!"

"You see! I told you!" crowed Hurricane.

Since it was a notably long shot, they measured the distance, stepping it off, and then using ropes for greater accuracy. They agreed that it was fully a mile.

Roman Nose and Little Bear both wished to buy the rifle. Little Bear offered ten ponies for the gun and a hundred rounds of ammunition, which was a liberal offer, ponies then being worth about thirty dollars apiece. But Bill refused to sell. He kept the horns of the big bull, which he had killed with the one-mile shot.

He made many other remarkable shots with this gun; two deer at one shot, two wild turkeys; and several times, two buffalo at one shot. He often killed antelope at from six hundred to a thousand yards. The Sharps' rifle, called "the buffalo gun" was introduced during the year or two after he went to the buffalo country. With his own gun, Bill killed seventy-five hundred out of his total eleven thousand buffalo. Hunters kept note books with daily records of hides taken, so this figure is accurate.

Originally 40-calibre, octagonal barrel, with set trigger, Bill's gun became so worn inside that he sent it back to the factory and had it re-bored to a 45-60. He wore it out the second time until a bullet would pass through straight, instead of following the rifle groove.

In 1878 his horse fell with him, breaking the stock of the rifle. He had just killed a yearling buffalo bull, so he set the wood pieces together, and wrapped strips of rawhide about it, tacking the ends. The shrinking rawhide drew and held the stock together tighter than bands of iron. After seventy years, it remains solid today.

The rifle load was 120 grains of black powder, with inch and a quarter patched bullet. Bill's outfit, and many others, bought their powder and lead, and loaded their own shells. They used three different charges of powder; for short range, 100 yards; 200-250 medium, and beyond that the long-range load. Bill's shoulder would often be lame and sore from the kick of the gun, and the use of the lighter charge made an appreciable difference, as well as economy. Some hunters carried shoulder pads.

Bill saw much of the Indians that winter, knew some as personal friends. Sleeping Elk, whom they liked, got married, but he had no lodge. The boys invited him to visit them. His bride was "just a real good Indian girl," as Bill described her. They treated her with respect, and tried to teach her how to cook in the white man's way, with small success. But she made them both some beaded ornaments, and a handsome pair of moccasins for Bill. They stayed a month, and parted the best of friends.

Of another sort was Scarface, a young warrior who bore the mark of a knife across his face. He observed Bill talking to a young Cheyenne belle one day, and a little later, when he and Hurricane were leaving, Scarface swaggered over.

"You do not talk to her any more," he said. "I want her. As soon as the grass is tall, I will go steal ponies from the Utes, to give her father for her."

"And he says he'll kill anybody, white or red, that tries to cut in and buy her ahead of him," interpreted Hurricane, further.

Unwittingly, however, Scarface was to save their lives. Early in april, 1874 he came to their camp one night, with another buck, and after being fed meat and coffee, they demanded whiskey. Hurricane gave them a small drink from his private jug. They wanted to buy it. "No swap," he returned.

Scarface seized Bill's rifle and pointed it at Hurricane, again demanding the jug. Leaping across the fire, Bill stuck his six-shooter in his ribs.

"Drop that gun," he commanded. "Get out of here!"

Scarface obeyed, and his companion who had taken no part in the quarrel, followed. The two white men looked at each other.

"It's time to get out," said Bill. Hastily they packed their outfit, and by morning were twenty-five miles away, and across the Kansas line. They counted better than they knew for, as Bill later learned, the Indians had already planned to kill and scalp them, and had actually agreed among themselves how their guns and horses should be divided.

Bill had one more meeting with Scarface, when a party of Cheyenne stopped at the Kiowa dugout on their way to Dodge City, where they hoped to trade ponies for ammunition. They were preparing for the coming warpath. Scarface had a Smith and Wesson revolver, but the extractor was out of order. He asked Bill to fix it, which he did.

"Are you married to the little squaw yet?" he asked.

"No," replied Scarface. But he would get the required ponies "pretty soon." In june, he was killed at Adobe Walls.

A happier acquaintance was Standing Bear, who visited often at their dugout, and used to help wait on the women who came to trade. Thirty-five years later, a bunch of Cheyenne came to the state fair at Oklahoma City, where Bill was judge of the races. One looked familiar, and Bill tried sign talk, but the man paid no attention. He had recourse to the interpreter.

"You tell him this story," he said.

"In the winter before the fight at Adobe Walls, we had a camp near the Cimarron, where we sold sugar and coffee and tobacco to the Indians. Standing Bear used to measure the sugar for the women, in a tin cup. When they had gone, he would show us how he had held his thumb in the cup each time, saving us sugar. He wanted a drink or some tobacco. He had earned it."

The Indian sat impassive. But as the story ended he sprang up and threw his arms around Bill, crying joyfully. "Beel, Beel!" They talked long of the old times, and the years between, and Standing Bear left with a box of good cigars under his arm, and patting Bill's shoulder with affectionate farewell.

Bad Medicine

As that winter of 1873-4 passed, Bill could sense a change in the Indians. The horse races, the groups sitting around their eternal gambling games, were seldom seen. Bill was given food, and their formal hospitality at the lodges of Little Robe and White Deer, but the masters were often absent. There were long councils. Young bucks paraded in war regalia, hopeful and arrogant.

Kicking Bird was cordial as always, but he, too, was often in councils. His two wives were fine tanners and Bill was bargaining one day for a handsome painted buffalo robe, when Kicking Bird returned. Scarcely had he been seated and puffed the ceremonial pipe with Bill, than a speeding horse was jerked up at the doorway. The rider entered and sat down with proper decorum, but his excitement was evident. Kicking Bird shot a question, and the other answered with rapid words. The chief called a command to the women. Then they smoked in silence.

Presently the flap swung back, and Mamanti entered, keeper of the Owl Medicine, their most potent mystery. He wore the skin of an owl's head hanging from his neck, and carried a fan of owl feathers. He sat in the place of honor, next to the chief. After him came a dozen sub-chiefs.

At a word from Kicking Bird, the messenger talked.

They listened. Questions were asked. The man repeated, "stick-stuck!" And again, "stick-stuck!"

With a handful of little twigs he tried to explain to his tribesmen something strange and new. Bill, watching eagerly, made out that there were white men with a wagon. But they were not hunters. The man set up three little sticks, a tripod. He showed the men signalling. One would call "stick!" and the other setting a peg would answer, "stuck!"

At last, he drew from his robe a stick, eighteen inches long, sawed wood, sharpened; the top battered; dirt on its lower part–a surveyor's marker. The Indians used pegs for their tepees. But these men were not putting up tents. They were setting their "stick-stucks" all over the prairie. It was as if they staked some huge, invisible tent to cover all the land.

Solemnly the mysterious "stick-stuck" was handed around. It came back to Kicking Bird, who passed it to Mamanti. From without, the barking of dogs, the shouts of children, laughter of women. Mamanti fingered the stick.

"It is white man's medicine," he said, at last. "They do not kill the buffalo, they seem harmless. But they make this medicine over all the land. It is bad medicine. It will take the land away from us, just as they have already taken our hunting grounds." He repeated sharply, "It is bad!"

The council broke up. Bill gave the chief some good tobacco, tried to tell him that the "stick-stucks" were harmless, that they would soon go away. He folded the robe he had purchased, soft as a cashmere shawl, with artistic painting on the skin side, done in red and blue.

Kicking Bird sat motionless in his upper place beyond the fire, his head lifted, his eyes far-seeing. In

Bill the cool assurance, the recklessness of the plainsman, for a moment was checked. He rode thoughtfully back to his own camp. He was to remember this on another day, and all his life.

After their little fracas with Scarface, Bill and Hurricane returned to the headquarters dugout on Kiowa creek. Here were fourteen men with plenty of ammunition, and within the state of Kansas. They felt able to withstand any attack. But the buffalo were nearly gone from here. Even wolves were scarce, for they followed the herds.

To their camp came Mart Childers, a cattleman who had brought ten thousand head from Texas the year before, ranging along the Arkansas river, north of them. With the winter storms, many of his cattle had drifted south into the Territory, as far as the Cimarron river.

"You boys know that country, and get along with the Indians," he said. "I'll pay five dollars a head for all the cattle you round up for me."

It seemed a good proposition, and six of them, including Bill and Hurricane, Wright Spencer and Dan Smith, loaded a camp outfit on pack horses and set out. Smith's father and brother had been killed by Indians, and he was always talking of what he would do for revenge. Two days' ride brought them to their dugout on Anderson creek. They spent the first day in cooking food and making preparations for their work. About four o'clock, Spencer, going for a bucket of water, dashed back, crying "Indians!"

Half a mile away, nine warriors were rounding up their horses. Having got them started, most of the Indians bunched up, gesturing toward the dugout.

"They're comin' for our scalps, too!" gritted Dan Smith.

"Better shoot one now, Dan," said Hurricane, with sly mockery.

"Too far," Smith grunted. "Let Bill try it."

"Yes, hurry up, Bill, before they come for us!"

It was a long shot, nearly a mile. Dropping on his belly, Bill raised the sights of his Sharps' rifle to one thousand yards, aiming just over their heads. In the close group of Indians, one threw up his hands and tumbled from his pony. The others scattered for cover. The stampeded horses were gone now. Presently two Indians dashed out of the draw where they had fled, leaning down to lift their fallen companion and throw his body across before one rider; all this without stopping their horses; a feat to which they were trained from boyhood. They all rode off.

The men held council. Two of them started shortly before sundown for their camp on Kiowa, afoot. They would travel as far as possible by night, and bring back a wagon to haul their outfit home. In the morning, Bill and Dan Smith set out to look for their stolen horses, and the other two remained to guard the camp.

Each with a pack containing blanket and food, and a bridle and lariat, besides their guns, Bill and Dan Smith ranged through the breaks and canyons. They had a field glass, which they used on every convenient height, hoping to locate the Indian camp. Then they would test to see if their lessons on getting Indian horses were well learned. Dutch Henry had told Bill, in some detail.

"Idts this way," Henry said, "You shlip up after dark andt get in the mittel of the horse herd, and roll up in your blankets and sleep. You dream that you haf got forty ponies running north wit' the buffalo, andt you wake up and find you was dream true. Dot's de way you been a goot horse t'ief."

Bill and Dan Smith were willing to try their ability to dream. But the trail of their own horses soon ran out. It was mid-afternoon of the second day when they struck a fresh Indian trail near Wolf creek, and topping a little rise, came face to face with two Indians on horseback.

They were not apparently hostile. They made signs. "Where are you going?"

Bill answered. "We have lost a span of mules and are looking for them."

"What color mules?"

"Gray," he told them. A faint grin flashed across the Indian's face.

"Come with us," he signed. "We found your mules. They are in our camp."

When liars get together! Bill knew their peril. But he had the advantage of knowing the Indians lied, while they believed they had entrapped the simple white men. It would be a grand joke of the kind they particularly enjoyed. They would entice them, kill them, perhaps as they sat eating. There would be two scalps and much honor for the captors.

Signing for the hunters to follow them, they set off. But in two hundred yards, they came to Wolf creek, twenty feet wide, and mid-sides to a horse. Bill and Smith stopped, saying they could not cross.

"Get up behind us," signed the Indians.

"The horses might pitch us off in the creek."

"No, no. Good horses!" they urged.

Bill, think fast! If he refused, there was no escape. A band of mounted Indians could easily track them down. The camp must be near. The sound of a gun, a yell, might bring a hundred warriors. There was just-one way. He hated to take it, but this was life or death. Death by torture, perhaps.

The Indian signed again. Bill nodded to Dan Smith and they mounted up behind. Bill's hand slipped to his knife. He spoke to Dan Smith, pointing as at something ashore.

"Do you remember your father and brother, and what you were going to do?"

"Yes. the murdering red thieves killed . ."

"Then work fast, if you don't want to meet them around the fire tonight!"

Bill's Indian also spoke to his companion, and both chuckled. If his partners had sometimes laughed at Dan Smith's talk, and doubted his nerve when the time should come, they were answered now.

As with one motion, the heavy hunters' knives flashed and drove deep, stabbed downward into brown throats, too quickly for one cry to spring. Two splashes in the water, a dark arm with bright silver bracelets flung upward, two crimson trickles mingling in the green-blue of the water.

Bill's mount was a good big pinto, which traveled fast. Bill afterwards sold him at Dodge City for forty-five dollars. But he had to wait for Dan, whose pony was a poorer specimen. Eleven hours brought them to the Anderson creek dugout. The men there hurried out.

"Thought you were Indians, at first, when I saw that spotted pony," said Wright Spencer.

Bill slipped off and flexed his muscles. An all-night ride on an Indian saddle was tiresome.

"No," he said. "We just got us a couple of Indian ponies. . . And Dan, here, got that Indian he's been talking about for so long."

His face was as blank as a poker player's. But, Spencer, who knew him, looked at him hardly.

"Yeah! How about you?" he queried.

No Indians had appeared at the dugout. And in the afternoon, the other two men returned with the wagon. Loading the saddles and outfit, the cattle hunters went home.

When they reached the Kiowa dugout, there was Mart Childers's foreman and three cowboys, who had brought twenty head of saddle and pack horses for their use. Childers wanted those cattle.

"Well, are you still game?" said Bill. The other five were. With Childers's horses, they set out for Eagle Chief creek. Riding in pairs, and keeping a sharp lookout for Indians, they began gathering cattle.

Buzzards circling high before the sun, circling, and dropping down. Bill and Hurricane turned their horses, as if moved by some unknown urge. Ordinarily, they would have ignored the birds.

"Might be one of Childers's cows," said Hurricane, and Bill nodded. So Bill saw the end of the story which he had heard in the lodge of Kicking Bird. A black burned spot beside the little creek; twisted irons of a wagon; camp stuff scattered about, torn and broken. Four bodies, scalped and mutilated, lying near. The buzzards flapped away. Bill and Hurricane rode to call their comrades and to bring their camp spade. They buried the pitiful remains.

Bill picked up a smashed mass of shiny wood and metal – a surveyor's transit. . . The lodge of Kicking Bird, the cry of Mamanti, "It is bad medicine!"

His words had borne fruit. The Indians had destroyed the men who planted "Stick-stucks" on their land.

White Deer's Race Horse

That winter had not been all hunting and Indians. The beautiful wild country held many sights and secrets. Along Indian creek, they viewed with curiosity many Indian tree burials, the rawhide "coffins" now rotting away. In one child's burial case a hole had let the bones fall out, and it was now a home for an old possum with a family of young ones. At another place, they gathered nearly a quart of beads from an ant hill, which the big red ants had collected where they fell to the ground.

There was the mystery of the poisoned wolves which didn't die; the salt spring which was their antidote; and because of this discovery Bill, in later years, more than once saved some poisoned dog.

Riding along the Cimarron bottoms one day, they saw a hole up on the side of the hill, which they thought might be a bear's den. They came next day with some dry pine torches, and crawled in, finding a cavern[11] with a maze of passages and chambers. They had gone some distance when wings whirred in their faces and knocked the torch from Hurricane's hand. It flickered out. They were in utter darkness. With matches, they could perceive bats hanging in masses from the roof. But they could not re-light their torch. They were trapped in that black cavern–to die of thirst and hunger? Once more the Dark Presence stood beside.

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[11] In Woods county, Oklahoma about 30 miles west of Alva.

But in groping for the torch, Bill felt the hollows left by their boot heels. The floor was covered with what appeared to be fine loose gravel; in reality it was dried bat guano, which held the impressions, imperfectly, indeed; but the only breaks in the level layer. Crawling, painfully feeling for those small heel prints, for four terrible hours, Bill and Hurricane at last came safely out.

Next time, provided with more torches and means of lighting, they fully explored the cavern, which extended some quarter of a mile back. They were probably the first white men to find it. The Indians knew of it, and told Bill a legend of a monster living there, which once seized an Indian baby. The Indians never ventured to enter.

In the middle of january, two cowboys hunting cattle, brought news of a dance at Sun City. It was only seventy-five miles, so Bill and Hurricane rode over. The dance was held in a mansion that boasted two rooms and a wooden floor. The women were outnumbered and from grandmothers down to the miss in short dress and pigtails, permitted her first dance, they were never without partners. So Bill had but few dances with Flora Kendall, a slim, brown-eyed stripling of fourteen. Joe Robinson, another one of the Kiowa creek outfit, got more than he. As he rode homeward, it was of Mollie, rather than Flora, that Bill was thinking. He had had no letter from her for a long time. Maybe he owed her a letter. He couldn't remember. Flora was kind of a pretty kid.

The Indians would gamble on anything, and once Bill matched them on marksmanship; the target, the ace of clubs at thirty feet; one Indian using bow and arrow, Bill his cap-and-ball pistol. Chief Kicking Bird was judge. Bill won the contest with one bullseye.

His prize was a fine saddle horse, probably "obtained" by the Osages, from Missouri. It soon earned the name "Pilot," for if given rein, he could head straight back to camp, for almost any distance and through the darkest night.

Visiting one day at the lodge of the Kiowa chief, White Deer, Bill saw the chief's son, a youth of sixteen, moving a horse on picket. But what a horse! Bill caught his breath. A rich, blood bay, fifteen and a half hands high, with a small white star in his forehead, the off fore foot and opposite hind foot white. Every line of him—from his springing, slender pastern to sloping shoulder and long-muscled hips, his short back and deep chest, his thin, fine-haired mane and tail, his delicate ears, in which the veins stood out; his easy, powerful stride, and the pride of him—proclaimed him a chief, a king of horses, indeed (*see plate* 3).

"Looks like a good horse," he said to White Deer, with mixed sign talk and words. "You swap?"

White Deer laughed in his face. "You get racehorse can beat him, maybeso swap! Go get race horse from Washington!"

To the Indians, everything that was finest came from Washington. White Deer's words were a taunt and a challenge. Let Bill bring him a better horse, to swap!

Four buffalo cows appeared on a hill about a mile from camp. White Deer's son seized his bow and quiver and motioned for Bill to follow. Barebacked, with only a rawhide rope about the horse's nose, he mounted. Riding through a little canyon, they came out about forty yards from the buffalo. Fitting an arrow to his bow, he nudged his horse. Swiftly, effortlessly, it moved up, alongside the last cow. The low whang of the bowstring, and the cow was stumbling, the feathers of the arrow sticking behind her shoulder; a clean lung-shot.

The horse raced on. There was no slacking pace as the expert bowman sent his arrows, and in a mile, pulled up. All four cows lay dead.

Bill had seen many Indians and white men shoot buffalo from a horse, and it was the exceptional hunter and horse that could take two in a single run.[12]

The boy drew up and came back. The horse was not winded, only his delicate nostrils distended a little, showing their bright pink. He danced and tossed his head, ready for more.

"White Deer's race horse" he was known to the four tribes. None among the Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne or Arapaho now would match him a race. But they would have bet all their possessions on him if any other would match against him.

Bill learned his history; no range pony, but a colt of richest thoroughbred blood, foaled in the Kentucky bluegrass region. Bill Maxwell, inheritor of the great Spanish land grant in New Mexico, had purchased him as a yearling. The carload of thoroughbreds was unloaded at Kit Carson, and started to the Maxwell ranch. The Indians stampeded the horses of the train. Most of the thoroughbreds were recovered. Others died in the hardships of the plains winter. But one colt survived; learned to eat dry grass and cottonwood bark; to huddle beneath a bank for shelter; to run surefooted over the prairie, rough with bunch grass, treacherous with prairie dog holes, broken with sudden canyon banks. Now he was mature, four years old, with the thoroughbred speed, stamina, beauty and intelligence; and with the range knowledge and hardiness of Indian ponies; the pride and treasure not only of White Deer, but of his band and tribe.

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[12] Though he was a warm friend of Buffalo Bill Cody, Bill always said that the tales of his killing many buffalo on a single run, were exaggerations.

As Bill stroked his shoulder, the horse turned and thrust his nose caressingly against his breast. He did not do that with any Indian, although they treated him well according to their lights. Was it a memory of his colthood days in the bluegrass, or the instinctive understanding of horse and man? Bill rode home with a disappointment that hurt. As well hope to obtain the crown jewels, as to get that horse. But how he wanted him!

Bill had been nearly the allowable six months absent from his claim on which he held a squatter right. It was fifteen miles west of Great Bend, where his former partner, George Roudebush also had taken one, and was living on it. Accordingly, not long after the Scarface episode, Bill rode over from the Kiowa dugout to renew his residence. Thence he went on, a day's ride, to Ellsworth, stopping overnight with Johnny and Gus Williams, two German boys from Ohio, and friends of Dutch Henry. As they finished breakfast next morning, the ex-cook outlaw and his brother Jake rode in. Talk rattled while a fresh breakfast was cooking. In a pause, Dutch Henry, filling his pipe, said:

"Bill, you are a goodt horseman, and I have just the horse you ought to have. I need some money, and I will sell him to you right . ."

"Where is he?"

"About a mile down the creek. We got some Indian ponies, sixty-five head, at a Caddo camp." The company grinned. It was a good joke on the Indians, who were professional horse thieves themselves.

When Henry had eaten, they set out. Bill was riding a good bay mare, weighing about 950 pounds. The ponies, driven through the night, were grazing in a bend of the creek. An average run of Indian ponies . .

Bill's hand froze on his bridle rein. There was White Deer's race horse!

"Yonder," Henry was saying. "That big bay. He's the best of the lot."

Henry didn't know how "best," though he of course had heard of the Kiowa racer. Bill's face was blank, his voice casual.

"Well Henry, he's maybe a little darker color, but he'd match up very well with my mare, and one of us ought to own them both. I will set a price, give or take."

To this Henry said: "I couldn't gif' you a dollar, for I haf'n't got idt. But I will take a hundred dollars for the horse. If I wasn't broke, I wouldn't take five times thadt, for he is the best horse I effer rode."

"Henry, a hundred dollars is a big price to pay for a horse, now-a-days, but seeing he matches my mare so well, I'll give you eighty-five for him."

"Fork idt over," said Henry. "You haf' boughdt a horse."

Bill counted out the money; transferred the saddle from his mare. He ran his hands caressingly, gloatingly, over the splendid body; rubbed his nose gently.

"Chief," he said. "My Chief!"

The long powerful stride of him under the saddle! How tireless on the fifty-mile ride back to the claim by Great Bend. Bill sang and laughed with exultation. He had told the Williams boys that this was the noted White Deer race horse, and hard on his heels came Dutch Henry.

They sat up most of the night arguing. As Bill cooked breakfast, Henry whittled moodily on a sliver of wood.

"Bill," he said, "if you don'dt give me the horse back, some time I will steal him."

Bill turned, fork in one hand, the frying pan with crisping bacon in the other.

"Henry if you do, some time I will kill you for it," he answered solemnly.

The little Dutchman stared at him. There was a long moment of silence and a green stick crackled and snapped in the fireplace. Henry stood up.

"By gott, Bill, if you think enough of that damned horse to kill me for him, just keep him. He is a great horse, and you know more about taking care of one than I do." He paused and went on in a softer tone: "Don't let the argument we have had affect our friendship, Bill."

Bill set the frying pan back on the fire and held out his hand. "All right, Henry," he said.

"The best horse I ever owned," he wrote long afterward, "and I have owned some good ones, including Chant, winner of the Kentucky Derby and of the Clark and Phoenix hotel stakes that same year. Chant was a counterpart of Chief in color, size and looks. But in my opinion, he never had the gameness, the stamina, good sense and affection for his owner that Chief had. I kept Chief till he died, and I shed tears when I buried him. While he lived we were never parted but once. I shipped him home to my father when I went out to New Mexico."

Nearly fifty years later, Bill drove five hundred miles over the mountains to the home of Dutch Henry, high up in the San Juan range in Colorado. For five days the two friends fished, and sat long evenings before the cabin fireplace reliving the old days. Next winter, Henry was dead.

Indian Warfare

For fourteen days it rained, the sun showing only for brief intervals. Streams overflowed their banks, and made swimming for horses. Hoofs sank squashily into the prairie sod. Riding in the rain, the men's clothes were always wet. Their flour moulded, and they were reduced to a meat diet. But they kept doggedly on, gathering cattle for Childers.

Having cleaned up the area around their camp, they decided to move eastward to Turkey creek. Bill and Hurricane were to take the cavalyard[13] and outfit. The sun was shining at last. They had traveled some ten miles when, suddenly, no more than a mile away, a hundred horsemen topped a hill.

Indians! They drew rein to study the group. But the Indians needed no time for consideration. With barely a pause, they split into two bunches and charged. War bonnets streamed behind them. The savage warwhoop sounded. Sixty-five of them – Bill counted later – more than a match for two. They must run for it.

It was open rolling country. But everywhere the ground was soft; the horses sank hoof-deep. They would soon tire. The Indians, of course, had the same handicap. But the white men had one advantage in their extra horses, thirteen head. The two poorest ponies bore the packs, and were the first to tire.

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[13] Bunch of horses.

"Cut them out and leave them," said Bill. "Maybe the Indians will stop to pick up the loot."

It was a slight diversion, but the Indians came on. At times they would be within half a mile.

"You could kill one of 'em at that range," suggested Hurricane. Bill shook his head.

"It wouldn't stop them, being so many. They'd ride all the harder to get revenge. They'll likely quit when their horses tire out."

But the Indians did not quit. As he learned later, they were headed for the Kansas settlements, and this was on their way. As their own mounts wearied, Bill and Hurricane roped others, leaped off for quick change of saddles, and rode on, tightening the girths as they went. The jaded horses they turned loose, and the Indians would pick them up, for they were better than their own ponies. By four o'clock in the afternoon, with the chase going since eleven, the two had dropped seven of their thirteen head.

Hurricane was riding a horse they called Ramrod, one of their best saddlers, but he could pitch like an outlaw. He could hunt cattle all day, but he was not a mudder, and the pace began to tell.

"I hate to let the old cuss go," mourned Hurricane.

"Well, you don't want to ride him to death, and lose your own scalp too." Bill grinned. "I pity the Indian that gets him."

They turned Ramrod loose, and, being well ahead, they stopped on the next little hill to breathe their horses, and looked back. They saw Ramrod submit quietly to being roped and saddled. An Indian stepped to his right[14] side, to mount.

The Indian swung up, and the horse went up too, "till we could see daylight under him," as Hurricane said. He came down, but the Indian, it seemed, kept going; turned a somersault in the air and shot down head first. He flattened out and lay still.

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[14] Indians mounted from right side; white men from left.

"Broke his neck, I guess," said Hurricane.

The chase continued, and the sun slipped down the sky.

"Bill, you've got a chance to make a big reputation here. We can pull up and you just pick off about a dozen with your old buffalo gun. Looks like they're not going to quit, as we figured."

"If I did," Bill came back, "you'd claim it was you killed them, and lie so hard everybody would believe you. Then where would I be?"

There was something doing, however. The Indians now split into three groups, one swinging to each side, while the center slowed a little.

"They're trying to herd us somewhere. Must be a camp ahead."

The two looked anxiously from every high point for sight of a camp, or another party. Bill squinted at the sun.

"If we can keep going till dark, we can give them the slip."

Hurricane now rode ahead, with Bill following behind the loose horses. Before them loomed a large hill, and with the Indians spread out, they had no choice but to go up it.

Suddenly Hurricane jerked his horse to its haunches.

"Get your gun ready," he yelled. "By . . they've trapped us!"

The hill fell away steeply to a swift and swollen stream, swirling in boils and eddies. Neither up nor down appeared any place that seemed accessible. The Indians closed in, with exultant yells. Bill sprang off and slipped down the bank. It was sand, and not clay, and his feet held. The other side was low and sloping.

"We can make it," he said.

He uncoiled the rope tied to his horse's neck, and sliding over, threw his weight on it. At the same time Hurricane spurred up, bumping Bill's horse from behind. He went over, floundered down, and found footing on a narrow shelf at the water's edge. Seeing him, the other horses came down, urged on by a few cuts of the rope from Hurricane, and started swimming. But the creek "was so boggy it would bog a saddle blanket." Hurricane got across and leaped off, uncoiling his lariat to rope two animals that got stuck. Bill seized his rifle and scrambled back up the hill.

On three sides the Indians were halted, about twenty in each bunch. Down near the bank he caught sight of four creeping stealthily toward the hill. He turned his gun on the center group, then fired at those upstream. Every Indian dropped off, lying flat on the ground. None returned the fire. The third party, downstream, leaped off and fired a volley. Bullets plopped into the ground, uncomfortably close. But standing bunched, these Indians offered a fair target. Bill fired two shots, and they also scattered and dropped flat. The four men sneaking up, rose and dashed back.

With a parting shot, Bill plunged down the bank to his horse. But he too, bogged down near the far side.

"Pull yerself out by your bootstraps," yelled Hurricane; but he galloped back, swinging his rope.

"That mule on Kiowa creek chewed them off," answered Bill, "and the horse never had any. Hurry up!"

He caught the rope as it fell, and was pulled ashore. With another cast, Hurricane pulled the horse out. They stopped at a buffalo wallow out on the ridge, which held a foot of clear water; then they let their horses drink and graze, while they washed the heavy mud off their boots and saddles. At last yells rose.

"Just found out we've gone!" grinned Hurricane.

The sun dropped low.

"It will be dark in an hour," said Bill hopefully.

Hurricane stared upstream. "They've got across," he said.

The Indians, too, considered the approaching darkness and, the whole band together, batted their mounts to a last, vindictive spurt.

Over the low, rolling hills the two men rode. Before them, in the last golden light, spread the valley of the Salt fork – Nescatunga – so gently sloping that it seemed like a level floor, with the hills lifting away to the sky and rimming it about; a curving cradle for the silver river that wound and wallowed in its wide bed of yellow sand.

But now, as they reached it, it was neither small nor silvery. A rolling, sullen ocean, red with the red soil it had washed away, glowing with an evil redness in the red gleam of the fading sun. Just below them, Driftwood creek poured in its swollen torrent. And all the water was wimpled with sucking boils and eddies.

The Indians, a mile behind, came on with exultant yells.

"Better leave the horses. We can't be bothered with them here," said Bill. They saddled the two which seemed the most fresh. As long as they could touch bottom at all, the animals kept trying to rise out of the water, and their progress was a series of lunges, much like pitching. However little the men minded a bucking horse on land, riding one in the midst of this sinister river was not a pleasant experience. For nearly half way, they were on a flooded flat, but as soon as they came to deeper water, the horses swam steadily and they were soon across.

Riding on a hundred yards, the two halted. Hurricane wrung out their saddle blankets, while Bill walked back to the stream. The Indians came up and halted, looking at the dark, swirling flood. They wanted those two scalps badly, but none of that river. The sun was gone, but some light lingered.

"Give 'em a parting shot and don't waste your powder!" yelled Hurricane.

Sight long, aim a little high. In the quiet of the summer evening, the heavy boom echoed. The Indians scattered, and from the commotion Bill guessed that his shot had hit, but the damage he never knew.

The war party crossed the Nescatunga the next day, killed and scalped a fourteen year old boy on Snake creek, in Kansas; then raided Sun City, a tiny settlement. But the settlers thereabout were organized and beat the raiders off. As they retreated, the Indians gathered all the horses they could find. The Sun City militia pursued, and in a fight on Eagle Chief creek, recovered the stolen stock. At the agency, some time later, the Indians reported that a son of Chief Little Robe was killed there.

Before they came upon Bill and Hurricane, this band of Indians had killed a man named Billy Watson, on the Chisholm trail. A few miles further, Pat Hennessey and his wagon drivers were killed, supposedly by the same Indians.

The other four cattle hunters saw the Indians chasing Bill and Hurricane, and they escaped by going eastward to the Mosier ranch on the head of Skeleton creek, thence to Caldwell, Kansas.

A Near-Lynching

Bill and his party knew when they had enough. Three times they had fled for their lives from the Indian country. Hunting there, whether for buffalo or cattle, was ended until more settled times. Bill's brother Dick was killed not far from the Kiowa dugout. The group broke up, abandoning the camp. Eight of them went to Dodge City. Bill, with Dan Smith, Hurricane, Henry Garris and Pat Callahan, drove southwest to the Canadian river country, in the Panhandle. The third night in that region they were attacked by a war party, bent on running off their horses. Left afoot, the men would be easy victims.

They beat the Indians off, keeping their horses safe. But they decided it would be impossible to do any hunting, and headed for the new trading-post of Adobe Walls, which they knew was near. Thus they learned of the fierce battle that had been fought three days before.

A watchman's rifle glinted from the small log lookout on the roof, yet an air of loneliness was upon the place. A charred black spot showed where a wagon had been burned. But the doors opened and the little company of storekeepers and hunters welcomed them. Here also was Dutch Henry.

"Well, py tamm, Bill," he said. "I'm sure gladt to see you. How did you dodge the Indians? We stood 'em off here, but it was a battle. A thousand of them, and out for blood."

So Bill heard the tale of the fight at Adobe Walls, one of the decisive battles of Western history. In later years, he was to hear the Indians' story from his friend Quanah Parker, the Comanche chief, and leader in that battle.

A combined force of the plains tribes, seven hundred and fifty strong, made a desperate assault upon the place, riding up to the very gates with a boldness unequalled in Indian warfare. Fourteen of the twenty-eight men within were buffalo hunters and crack shots; among them Billy Dixon and Bat Masterson. Sheltered behind the stockade and earthen walls, they fought the Indians off with severe slaughter. The first battle of the war was lost, and the red men scattered into smaller bands for a summer of raiding.

"Bat," said Dutch Henry, "here's Bill Tilghman, and I bet he can beat you shooting."

Bill saw a handsome young fellow, a year or two older than himself, with a reckless, devil-may-care look. He was already an experienced plainsman and a noted shot. They looked at each other in silent appraisal for a moment, and found it good. Without words, their friendship was born. Bat Masterson answered lazily:

"We'll have to try a shooting match."

Back at Dodge City, Bill found two of their outfit from the Kiowa dugout preparing to leave for the new gold strike in the San Juan region of Colorado. He and Garris and Callahan joined them. They journeyed up the Santa Fe Trail, its traffic largely taken now by the railroad. The third day, in mid-afternoon as they rode close to the river, two Indians appeared on the other side, rounding up a bunch of nearly fifty horses.

"They're cow horses!" cried Pat Callahan. "Come on. Let's stop 'em!"

The whole party was pretty sore at Indians, and chasing these two from their booty would be a satisfaction. Henry Garris's horse did not swim well, and he turned back. Bill and Callahan crossed and gave chase to the Indians, who hurried the loose horses toward the sand hills. A black pony lagged, and they left it. As he passed, Bill saw that it had been ridden hard and discarded. The white men gained. They were almost within revolver shot, when Callahan cried out.

"Look out! Up on that sand hill!"

They glimpsed a war party, some fifty Indians, who ducked back instantly, waiting for the victims to run into their arms. But the two whirled, and were well back toward the river before the Indians saw their mistake and came on. As he passed the run-down pony, Bill dropped his rope on its neck and took it along. It was a good horse, and he would have that much out of the adventure.

The dice of Fate are always loaded. With several other parties, they camped that night by the bridge at Granada, Colorado, a new town on the Santa Fe railroad. They slept . . wakened . .

"Throw up your hands!" "That's him!" A mob of a hundred angry men, headed by the sheriff, surrounded them. They singled out Bill's party.

"Who claims this pony?"

"I do," answered Bill. "I captured him from two Indians down the river, this afternoon."

"Indians, hell! There ain't an Indian within a hundred miles of here, you dirty liar!"

They were hustled back to town, where more men gathered.

"Hang them! hang them!" the crowd raged. The sheriff rushed his prisoners into the dugout jail, locked it and set a guard. He called Bill into the small building which was his office.

"Where is that belt?" His deputy handed over the belt they had taken off Bill, along with his guns. The knife scabbard hung empty. The sheriff was official.

"Is this your belt?" Bill admitted that it was.

"Where is that knife?" The deputy produced a skinning knife, crusted with dried blood. The sheriff slipped it into the scabbard, where it fitted exactly into the worn edge.

Bill's head was whirling. That was his own knife, lost two weeks ago on the Coldwater, beyond Adobe Walls. There were the notches that he had cut on the handle to keep it from slipping through his hand, since it had no guard!

"Now," said the sheriff, grimly, "tell me where you lost that knife out of your belt."

"Down on the Coldwater, in No Man's land, about two weeks ago."

The deputy gave a snort, and the sheriff's face grew harder.

"How old are you, kid?" he asked.

"Twenty years old, today." It was the fourth of july, a birthday that he would long remember.

"Murderers!" yelled the crowd outside.

"You're young, kid. Come clean and I'll try to protect you. At least I can stand 'em off tonight. Some of you killed George Shoemaker."

"I don't know a thing about it," protested Bill. "I've just come up the Trail from Dodge City."

"Your lying won't do you any good, kid. This knife was found on his body, down the river this afternoon, and you show up with an empty scabbard and his black pony that you claim as yours!"

Fresh howls rose outside. Bill suddenly went cold. Here indeed was evidence enough to hang any man. And they didn't know yet that the knife was really his! They might hang his partners, too.

"Sheriff," he said, earnestly, "I'll tell you all I know; the truth." Rapidly he went over his movements for the last two weeks, from Coldwater creek, Adobe Walls, Dodge City, to the picking up of the run-down pony.

"I can bring witnesses from Dodge City, and if you'll keep us safe until tomorrow, you'll find the country is full of Cheyennes on the warpath."

The sheriff was impressed. Doubt and belief struggled in his face. Leaning close, that the deputy might not hear, Bill said: "I'll tell you all of it. That knife is one I lost two weeks ago on Coldwater, and I have not seen it since. Give me a chance and I'll prove it. Or you can hang me, and I'll not whimper!"

The clamor outside shrilled louder, but with a new note. The sheriff's face grew darker, but his voice was still uncertain. A guilty man would hardly admit such ownership.

"How did the knife get here then?"

The question was answered. A violent knocking at the door; an urgent calling. The deputy unlocked the door, and a man burst in.

"Indians!" he cried. "They're all around here."

Two different parties had come in, fleeing from Indians. They would attack the town by daybreak! The mob forgot Bill and his partners. They rushed for more guns, put out guards. The sheriff hustled Bill back to jail. At ten o'clock next morning, they were all released, but their horses and equipment were held "for further investigation."

Posses going out found pitiful victims. Bill went with one party, and was not the only one who turned away, sick at the sight. They rolled the bodies in blankets. One was a man of family, but none of them was permitted a last look. The blanket and the nailed-down coffin lid must hide the horror.

Bill and his partners were held in loose custody for about a week, until the Indian scare subsided. Then a hearing was held before a justice of the peace and, as that official said, "honorably discharged."

But the deputies still kept their guns and horses. They had received reports of stolen goods, they said, and must hold them for identification. They were expecting the owners on the next train; they would doubtless have an officer and a warrant for the thieves. They hoped to scare Bill's party out, or weary them into giving up. But Bill was not going to give up his old Sharps' rifle nor his beloved Chief.

"I'll stick till hell freezes over!" he told the deputy.

He and Pat Callahan boarded a train and brought an attorney from Garden City, Kansas. Faced with an attorney and a writ, the Granada officials, with sour looks turned back most of the property. They made away with one of Bill's six-shooters, and a fine pair of beaded buckskin gloves.

The gold fever had cooled among Bill's group, but they had not made a cent since their first flight from the Indians. Henry Garris was a good blacksmith and easily found work at Granada. Another job offered itself to Bill. A Doctor Armstrong, who had prescribed for him when he had pneumonia at Kit Carson, two years before, now had a ranch thirty miles west of Granada.

"Tilghman," he said. "I have just sold 3,100 head of stock cattle to be delivered on Crow creek, Wyoming, south of Cheyenne. You have hunted over the country, and if you and your three partners will take them, I'll pay five dollars a day."

Making the few water holes in that high plains country, in mid-summer, required good management. But they had no mishap until they reached the sand hills on the South Platte. Here wolves ran a bunch of antelope through the bed ground at night, and the cattle were up and off. It took two days of hard riding to gather them. But they delivered the herd at Crow creek.

They rode home by way of Denver and Pueblo. The first was "red hot and still heating" as Bill described it. "It was trying to outdo Dodge in the way of dance halls and saloons, and the gangs were real hilarious." Chinese Row was something new, this being Bill's first glimpse of the celestials. Not having been paid off, the party soon had enough of viewing the sights, and went on to Pueblo, "which was not any preachin' town, either."

The city on the Arkansas was celebrating its victory over Denver in a championship ball game, and the man of the hour was "Chalk" Beeson, captain of the winning team. Young Mr. Beeson was a man of parts. Besides his sporting activities he was a musician, and that night was playing the clarinet in the orchestra of the dance hall where the rejoicings centered. He was later to be one of Bill's strongest friends; a leading citizen of Dodge City; director of the Dodge City cowboy band, which carried its fame over the United States. Sheriff, rancher, and sportsman.

Death Rides Hard

At Granada, Bill found a letter from Hurricane Bill, begging him to come back to Dodge City. He had a four-man outfit by Wild Horse lake. No Indians had bothered, and buffalo were plenty. Bill could have a half interest if he'd come and do the shooting. The present man was no good.

Riding Chief, Bill set out alone. He left the Santa Fe Trail, and followed the divide between the Arkansas and the Cimarron, directly toward Crooked creek. The distance was about a hundred and fifty miles.

On the second night of his journey he was restless. Four times he wakened with a sense of danger. He scanned the sky line but could see no Indians, nor hear anything. At the first gray light he went to his horse, loosed the hobbles, and put his lead-rope on. As he rubbed Chief's nose, the horse threw up his head, his ears pricked westward, where lay Bill's saddle and blankets. Almost at that spot, two hundred yards away, charged fifty Indians.

Bill leaped on Chief's back. Now, indeed, White Deer's race horse had a race to run. The Indians fired a volley of shots, and bullets hit the ground about him. Bill was wearing his two six-shooters, but the odds were too many, and time lost in pausing to shoot back would be against him.

Chief was gaining. After the first mile, all but ten of the best mounted Indians dropped out. He pulled

Chief down a little, saving him what he could. Smooth as the prairie looked, it was far from good footing. Worst of all, this year was one of extreme drouth. Great cracks split in the earth that could catch and snap a horse's leg like a pipestem. Over such treacherous going, Chief's thoroughbred sinews, the spring of his long strides, his range-bred wisdom, carried him surely on.

But upon Bill was the nervous prescience that had oppressed him all the night. More danger. With tense keenness, he scanned the country before him. There were buffalo and antelope grazing peacefully. Gray wolves hunting. He looked at his watch. An hour and three-quarters since the race began, he judged. The sun swung upward.

Five shots. The Indians were about a mile behind. Foolish, shooting at that range, he thought. Suddenly, off to his right, the buffalo were running. Six hundred yards away, the flash of shields and lances, war bonnets streaming, twenty Indians charging. Terrible laughter surged within him.

"Bill, you knew they were coming!"

The men of the first band stopped, glad to give over the chase to others, even though failing of the coveted scalp. Bill slackened Chief's rope, and the thoroughbred moved on, gaining from the second group as he had on the first. The stamina of forebears bred for four-mile heats showed now. In forty-five minutes he was two miles ahead. The Indians stopped and dismounted. Bill did likewise. He and Chief could use a rest, too. Riding barebacked, he was bruised and raw, blood running down into his boots; his clothes were soaked. Chief's glossy coat was a welter of blood and sweat, not only from Bill's hurts but his own. Blood ran from his withers, chafed by his rider's body. Farther back was a cruel wound, the skin torn off for a hand's breadth, by the tip of Bill's revolver.

The august sun blazed hot. The Indian ponies stood with drooping heads. Thirty minutes. The Indians mounted, swung about and rode away. Chief had outrun them, beaten them, in that terrible race against two relays. He had run forty-two miles, in two hours.[15]

With a prayer of thankfulness, Bill resumed his journey. He could hardly manage to remount, and Chief flinched from the pain. His ears were drooping, his feet dragged. Looking far over the prairie, Bill could see no more sign or sight of Indians, and his premonition of danger was gone. There remained wounds, heat and thirst.

Noon, and no water. His tongue began to swell. He got off and lay down. Out of the heat waves glimmered a cool lake; a mirage. Bill knew it, but the sight was maddening, nonetheless. Chief could not graze, and Bill could not climb on his back again.

He scanned the prairie, trying to get his bearings. He must be near Wild Horse lake.

"Come on, Chief," he said. The horse followed, as he started walking. Every step was searing pain, rubbing the raw, skinned flesh.

Two miles. He breasted a little ridge and looked down on a wide basin–Wild Horse lake, brown and dry. Not a wild horse, buffalo, antelope, in sight. That told the tale. No water! Dragging on through the burning afternoon, he passed several old camps. At one was an empty powder can, and standing on it he managed to climb on Chief's back. The next hope of water was Crooked creek. The stars were guides now, and he knew the country. At midnight appeared the darker streak of timber. Dropping off his horse, he pushed down the bank. Powdery dust rose! He set out down the channel, calling Chief, who followed along the bank.

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[15] Bill checked the distance at a later time.

Three o'clock. He could go no further. He lay down, and in spite of pain and thirst he slept. At dawn, so sore and stiff he could hardly move, Bill crawled up the bank to where Chief waited. There, a quarter of a mile down the creek, a dozen mules were grazing. Men, a camp near! Rounding a point of timber, he saw five wagons. Three Mexicans came to meet him.

"Agua, agua!" he begged. They gave him drink, but shook their heads when he asked water for Chief. But they gave him a bucketful when Bill offered to pay, and the horse gulped it in three swallows. The men gave Bill breakfast and, as he drained his coffee cup, one pointed south exclaiming, *"Americanos!"* Two wagons loaded with hides, going toward the creek. Bill paid the Mexicans a dollar. They helped him on his horse, and he rode on.

"Hello, Bill!" It was Joe Robinson, who had hunted with him the year before. The outfit was hauling hides to Dodge City, but on hearing Bill's story they piled one wagon's load on the other, and sent it back to bring in their outfit and partners. Bill rode the rest of the way into Dodge City on a blanket spread on the load of hides.

Hospitals were unknown in the plains country, so he purchased iodine and other medicaments, and took a hotel room. Chief, he placed in the care of a veterinary. Soaking off his blood-dried garments Bill dressed his hurts, and after three days in bed was able to get around. It was weeks before he was well, however, and the wound on Chief's shoulder was even longer in healing.

In this period, before Bill undertook any other work, came his first service for the law; the recovery of the stolen oxen for Sheriff Charlie Bassett. Then he paid a visit home.

It was good to be with his family again. The house rocked with laughter as Bill played pranks or teased his sisters. They were young ladies now, and paid him back in kind. They took him to parties and picnics, too, where he met his old companions. Already, with three years' absence, they had different interests. The young men had found work, as he had done. Some were married. He called on Mollie Prather, but the half understanding between them was passed over. They met as friends. He was a man of the plains, now. And she did not lack other admirers.

William and Amanda looked on him with loving pride. A strong man, winning his way; a gentleman, kind and clean, and worthy of his race.

But visiting is in essence transitory. He had been idle long enough. A new railroad had been completed from Kansas to Texas through the eastern part of the Indian Territory. He rode the MKT to Denison, Texas, passing through Vinita and Muskogee, towns that he was to know well in later years. But he saw nothing to tempt him in the Indian nations, or civilized tribes, each with its own government, and a mingled population of full bloods, mixed bloods and whites.

The wide plains called him back.

More soldiers were gathering at Fort Dodge. Carloads of supplies were unloading. From there, and Fort Sill, from Texas and New Mexico, General Nelson Miles was sending out military columns that would converge on the Indians, following relentlessly, to break their last resistance.

Bill hunted buffalo again with Bat Masterson and Neal Brown as partners. Fred Sutton, an Atchison boy a few years younger than Bill, was hired as camp boy and to peg out hides. Dodge City was still their headquarters. It was growing, and held a new importance as a division point and location of the large shops of the railroad. Cattle were coming more and more into the country, to graze on the grass lands whence the buffalo were gone. Bill filed on a homestead claim on Bluff creek.

Charlie Bassett, six-foot-two, nicknamed "The senator" because of his handsome presence, with boyish face that belied the steel beneath, had been appointed first sheriff of Ford county, in the summer of 1873, and elected for the term in november. He it was who gave Bill his first commission. Now his term was drawing to a close, and certain men of political influence picked Bat Masterson for his successor. Bat was willing to run. It was understood that Bill would be his deputy. In november, 1877, Masterson was elected, and on the first of january, 1878, Bill was sworn in as undersheriff.

His plainsman's life was a chapter closed.

A Servant of the Law

Law-Enforcement Officer—His Life Work

On july 4, 1877, Bill Tilghman was twenty-three. For seven years he had been a plainsman, meeting storms and deadly cold; floods, scorching summer and drouth and thirst; danger of wild beasts and savage men; the hidden terror of poison fang. He had seen sickness and wounds and death, and he had toiled heavily with his hands and all his strength.

He had traveled over the whole area of the last frontier, embracing portions of five states. He knew streams and crossings and camping places; how to find the best route where no man had left trace before him; knew high hills and landmarks and could take his course by the stars, or travel with an unerring sense of direction, to arrive at a given goal.

He knew every trick of living; making a dry camp on the prairie; staking his horse "to a hole in the ground;"[16] digging a narrow trench to keep his fire in a high wind; and starting a fire with wood or weeds or buffalo chips, whatever might be at hand; how to cook food, with the best camp facilities, or with nothing but his knife and the fire. He knew how to save and get the most from his horse in long rides.

And with it all, he had seen the face of God. He had grown into the nature of the land, wide, generous, free and tolerant, its rigors and sternness answered by resolution within him, his unfaltering faithfulness.

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[16] If no picket pin was available, the rider would dig a hole six inches deep with his knife, and tying a large knot in the end of his lariat, set it in the hole and tamp the earth around it. The sideways pull of the horse would not pull it out, but it came out easily with a straight pull upward.

The great buffalo herds were slaughtered, their bones white upon the prairie, to be gathered by the wagon-load and sold as a meager living by struggling settlers. These were few as yet. Cattle held the ranges where the buffalo had grazed. And up from Texas a new trail was opened, on which the long-horns came in hundred-thousands. Settlements pushing westward had crowded the Chisholm Trail, and now, when the Quahada Comanches had made the last surrender, and the ways were safe, the Western or Texas Trail was made. From Doan's Crossing of Red river it led northward, across the Indian Territory, with never sight of house or fence for three hundred miles; untrammeled, with grass and water, and easy crossing of the streams; straight north till near the Cimarron, thence northwest to Dodge City.

Dodge City was the end, or the half-way point. On the wide prairies and watered streams about it, the great herds were held until they could be sold, or sent on. Some went to new ranges in Kansas and Colorado. Others merely halted for rest and supplies, driving on to the Indian reservations of Montana as "beef contracts," or to the northern ranges. And vast numbers of them were prodded up the chutes into stock cars, to become beef in Kansas City or Chicago.

Weary with weeks upon the Trail, without sight of a roof or a woman's face, with their accumulated wages burning their pockets, the cowboys came into Dodge City to relax and celebrate. They would crowd into a few brief days and nights the life and those enjoyments from which they had been so long cut off. Money was naught except as it aided their town pleasures. Well they knew its futility upon the plains, where a pocketful of gold might be of less value than a cup of water.

Many of them had never seen a train before. Some still cherished a Civil War grudge against the Yankees. They were primitive, too, with the childlike urge to show off. Stores and saloons, dance and gambling halls welcomed them as customers, but each was one among many. The gamblers with their fancy vests and long, slick fingers; the bartender with diamond stick-pin and curled moustache, his clean and barbered ensemble; the city-dressed cattle buyers from Kansas City: the cowboys felt their difference from these. They would prove that they were not inferior. "Shooting up the town" had become traditional in every frontier place.

But, "Dodge City is one town that you can't shoot up!" they were told. And now and again some doubter found the end of doubting in a shallow grave upon Boot Hill.

Nevertheless, Dodge seethed with an explosive mixture; the wildness of the cowboys; the professional "bad men"; the men of prey, those gamblers who were ready to aid skill and luck by trickery and gunplay; and the potent "red-eye" which most of them drank raw.

Ed Masterson, younger brother of Bat, was city marshal. Seeking to stop a quarrel and gun-play, he tapped one man on the head with his six-shooter. But the fellow shot him. Wounded, and with one arm useless, the plucky young marshal shot him down and then disposed of the other man. Men hurrying to his aid found Ed Masterson propped against a table, holding half a dozen in a corner before his gun.

It was a different story some months later, in april of 1878. Two men from Texas killed him and escaped from town. Bat, three months since made sheriff, took a brief farewell of his dying brother, then rode after the killers. Bat came back.

Bill took up his work as a servant of the law with the same quiet determination to make good, as when he had herded cattle or filled his station with grading or harvest crew. Being an officer meant more than a gun and a badge. As under-sheriff, he had charge of the office and records, feeding of prisoners and supervision of the jail. And even as Bill had studied the habits of gophers to set his traps cunningly, so he studied the ways of wayward men. Gradually he learned legal processes; evidence; gained a considerable knowledge of the laws. Mike Sutton, the county attorney–prosecutor–was his able preceptor. He was long rated one of the best lawyers in Kansas, and as he saw Bill's interest, took pains to help him. So, from the amateur, handling processes and warrants like lessons learned by rote, Bill emerged into the trained officer.

Masterson, brave and a good shot, cared nothing for the fundamentals, or finer points. When his term as sheriff ended, he was done with official business; while Bill had found his life work. It became a study, a challenge to pit himself against law breakers. It was his pride to win, and to win fairly. Always his friends were remonstrating that he took too many chances; that he was too liberal with the offender who, they pointed out, would accord him no such chivalry. But it was no foolhardy courting of danger for the thrill of it, nor under-rating the criminal's mind and actions; rather it was a sure confidence in his own ability to act, and to gauge correctly the chances taken. In reality Bill was cautious. Brain and body, hand and eye were coordinate and responsive. When he acted he was master of the situation, yet ready to meet any unexpected turn.

In his official work, he found new reason to avoid liquor. "He's refused a million drinks," ran the saying; and "No man ever saw Tilghman take a drink."

"I saw too much of the effects of it," he said. "I've seen many a man get killed just because his hand was a little unsteady or slow on the draw, when he had a few drinks in him."

There were no photographers and finger-print men, chemists and ballistic experts. The sheriff must be his own detective and evidence man; and on him, as much as the prosecutor, depended the final dealing of justice. Bill developed a trait which he already possessed, of quiet watchfulness, of seeing men's faces. He could distinguish individuals in a crowd, read their faces, even their attitudes and gestures. "There's a fellow ready for action," his mind would register. "That one's studying about it." He would rate them; "There's a bad one"; or, "a two-bit crook."

He would walk through the streets of Kansas City on a holiday visit, but like a woodsman, reading "sign." A casual remark: "That man is sick"; "That woman's in trouble"; "Something queer about him." In later years, after our marriage, I asked him, "How do you tell? What is it?"

"God Almighty never made a crook but he put his mark on him," he answered. He could not specify any feature or sign, but he was seldom wrong. Rarely did he speak ill of any man. But three times that I know of, he thus judged men who were respectable and with whom he had no particular acquaintance. In all three cases, within a few years he was proven right. The criminal qualities which he saw, came into action.

But detective ability of another sort was required to catch horse thieves and robbers escaping into the great wilderness beyond Dodge City. There Bill's knowledge of the country, of creeks and water, ranches and camps, and distances, came into play. With the time needed to notify the sheriff's office, such men would have a start that made direct pursuit impossible. To forecast their movements and head them off was the only effective method.

The young officers soon had an important case. A telegram from Kinsley, to the east, reported the hold-up of a Santa Fe train by several men who were supposed to be riding west. The leader was Dave Rudabaugh, who had a deserved reputation as a bad man.

"Where would they be heading?" asked Masterson.

"No Man's land,"[17] said Bill. "But they'll have to stop somewhere, and Lovell's camp is the only place in that direction. We can beat them there," he added.

"Yes, I think you're right," agreed the sheriff.

Lovell, a cattle man, was a reputable citizen. But the generous custom of the plains demanded food and shelter for all wayfarers. And these robbers were no doubt able to force it if refused.

A posse was quickly collected, Masterson, Tilghman, Dave Morrow – Prairie Dog Dave – Joshua Webb, and Charlie Bassett. They rode straight to Lovell's camp, a dugout with horse sheds and corrals, arriving shortly after dark, with an icy wind behind them.

"The Rudabaugh outfit will sure have to stop here, with this storm," remarked Bill as he carried in a load of wood.

The wind continued next day, with spits of sleet and snow. One man kept watch, while the others played cards by the fire.

"They're coming!" was the word, at last.

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[17] The Panhandle counties of Oklahoma. It was so called because it had no sort of government or legal status until, in 1890, it was included in the territory of Oklahoma. It offered a refuge for lawless characters, convenient to southwest Kansas.

The rest is no heroic story of a bloody gun battle and a fight to the death, but of a logical plan which worked. Only one cowboy was in sight when Rudabaugh and his men stamped in, hungry, cold and weary. They could stop now. The storm would end pursuit.

Suddenly, they were facing five guns, five resolute men, whom they all knew as deadly. "Put 'em up," said the sheriff.

They surrendered without a shot being fired. And Bill took charge of the evidence, the loot from the train robbery, which he found intact in their saddle bags. They were turned over to the Kinsley officers.

Such an operation might seem tame; not what is expected from a wild west sheriff. But no one in that country who knew Rudabaugh and his men was unaware that the officers risked their lives. It was a matter of wondering comment that the men were taken without bloodshed. From an official standpoint, it graded one hundred percent effective; every man concerned was captured, and evidence to convict secured, the stolen property recovered.

The sheriff was gone to Topeka when a popular actress, Dora Hand, was killed lying in bed, by a shot fired through the window. It was not meant for her. About two weeks before, Jim Kelly had occupied this room. He had a quarrel with a young fellow named Kennedy, son of a cattle-man and a Cheyenne mother. The half-breed went to Kansas City and purchased a good horse, which he had shipped to Dodge. He told that he was going to Cheyenne, Wyoming. Then in the night he rode up and fired his shot, as he supposed, at Jim Kelly.

Masterson wished to wire to Cheyenne officers. But Bill argued that Kennedy's talk had been a blind; that he would circle southwest toward his father's ranch and perhaps on to New Mexico. They could head him off.

Sheriff Masterson, Bill, Wyatt Earp, Charlie Bassett and Pat Duffy rode straight to the Cimarron crossing near Meade city. And in the twilight their man came. Called on to surrender Kennedy tried to parley, then to spur his horse on, as he fired his gun. But the horse, struck by three bullets from the posse, fell with him, breaking his right arm badly. He cursed them and swore vengeance. Several inches of bone had to be removed and his arm was useless. But he could still shoot with his left hand and later killed two men, before being killed himself.

As there was no witness to the killing of Dora Hand, and ballistics was then unknown Kennedy went free at his trial, and left Dodge City.

The two years in office passed quickly. Masterson's term was at an end. Bill took his family to Atchison, shipping Chief also, and then went to New Mexico on a railroad then building. After a little more than a year, he returned to Dodge City.

Pat Sughrue was next elected sheriff in 1882.

"Bill," he said, "I want you for my under-sheriff." Sughrue held the office for two terms, four years in all, and Bill was deputy through that time. They did not spare in hardship or promptness in their duty. Together they made a ride of one hundred miles in twenty hours, capturing a horse thief and recovering the horses.

Bill alone made a much longer journey, a forecast of the unforgetting persistence which he displayed in all his later work. This time one George Snyder, stealing a horse near Dodge City, apparently had made a clean get-away. About a month later, Bill learned that the man was at Mobeetie, Texas, almost three hundred and fifty miles from Dodge City. But Bill must make a longer trip, first to obtain a requisition from the governor of Kansas at Topeka, thence to Kansas City and down the MKT railroad to Fort Worth and Austin. Here he would present his papers to the governor of Texas, and go by rail to Gainesville, thence by stagecoach to Mobeetie. The return was by the same way, a total of more than two thousand miles.

He found Snyder watching a poker game in the gambling hall.

"You're wanted back at Dodge City," said Bill, his hand poised easily near his gun. Snyder backed away.

"You can't arrest me!" he cried. "This is Texas."

"And the governor has just honored a requisition for you. So you'd better put up your hands and come along."

Snyder ducked under the table, hoping to reach the door while Bill would be prevented from firing by the men who were playing. Bill, as he expected, did not shoot, but the card game was rudely spoiled as he leaped up on the table, over it, and came down, his foot hitting Snyder crawling out. It knocked him flat, but also tripped Bill. Amid the scramble of escaping players the horse thief got up, but Bill's hand grabbed his ankle, jerked him down. In a moment Bill was on top, and his fist crashed upon Snyder's jaw. He lay quiet.

By this time the marshal of Mobeetie came dashing in. Bill rose and reached into his pocket.

"Here," he said. "I couldn't find you a while ago. But here's my requisition for this man."

The Texas marshal glanced at the unconscious Snyder on the floor and drawled his answer:

"You-all takes a heap o' trouble. If he stole the hawse, why didn't you jest shoot him?"

Dodge—A City With A Sense of Humor

Cities may have personalities. And that, perhaps, is why Dodge City, with all its frontier wildness, outlived that without becoming decadent. It had a spirit, an individuality which vitalized, so that its fame has survived as a splendid legend, while Ellsworth and Hays are forgotten, Abilene and Ogallala only names. Yet in their day, these all had scenes as wild as Dodge.

But Dodge City had a sense of humor. It was this that differentiated it. It was neither sodden in its iniquity nor smug in its respectability. It wore the name of "Wicked Dodge," admitted it gleefully; while behind its laughter was the self-confidence of integrity and honor, and charity for men.

The city was fortunate in having a group of high type citizens, men of power, intelligence, and enterprise. And from the beginning it was such strong and able men who guided its destinies; who knew the plains in all their aspects; who could outgame and outshoot the wild bunch; who had constructive vision, and under the froth of its saloons and dance halls and excesses, these men carried on an orderly social structure, and a vast commercial business.

There was Robert M. Wright, "Bob," who had come to this region in 1859, driver and freighter on the Trail; rancher, putting up hay for the big contracts of the army posts; plainsman, explorer, scout, trader.

He was the foremost citizen of Dodge City from its founding until his death. He served as president of the townsite company, mayor, and representative in the legislature. The trading store of Wright and Beverly employed more than forty men, and could transact business in six languages, including Cheyenne and Arapaho, for which Mr. Wright himself was called upon. Their business ran from $300,000 to $400,000 a year, notwithstanding that there were two or three other large firms in town. Mr. Wright did a courtesy banking business also. Cattle-men would leave with him certified checks for as high as $50,000 to pay for a herd on its delivery. They would make deposits with the firm to draw upon, and the cowboys' pay checks were cashed there.

Zimmerman's sporting goods emporium had never a tennis racquet nor golf club, but it did a huge business in guns, ammunition, belts and hunters' goods.

Hotels were less ornate than those in Kansas City, but afforded comfort and good food. Separate eating places were rare, although in time came the short-order restaurants that served chiefly beefsteaks and ham and eggs.

Young Chalkley Beeson, musician and baseball player, came to Dodge City soon after Bill met him at Pueblo. He was chief promoter of baseball; and he developed the Dodge City Cowboy band, which toured the country for fifteen years. Mr. Beeson became one of the substantial ranchmen of the county, and sheriff.

Early courts and justice at Dodge City lacked something of the formality of the older order, perhaps, but even the police judges were not the crude and ignorant type sometimes chosen in frontier places. The few early lawyers were trained and able men.

Doctor T. L. McCarty, "Doc," dressed wounds and gave out pills, brought babies into the world, and served his patients for forty years. His own son, Claude, the first child born at Dodge City–save for one of nameless parentage–became his associate and carried on his father's work.

There were a score of other old-timers: George Hoover, the first banker, Pat Sughrue, Ham Bell, Brick Bond, A. J. Anthony, Pat Riner, who stayed through the good years and the lean, and carried on various businesses in town. They were interested in cattle ranches, and wheat and alfalfa, the two crops which finally saved the farmers from their futile attempts at corn growing. Most of the men lived their lives out here, forty years or more. It was their town, and when their hair was gray they still worked for its welfare as they had in early days; now progress meant paved streets and automobiles and air-conditioning. These men were Bill's friends and associates, his chosen companions.

Such men backed up the line of peace officers who tamed the wild and transient element. They had the background of good families, and some education, plus the abilities of men of the frontier. They entertained high army officers and distinguished visitors of America and Europe, with a gracious and sincere courtesy. At home, they dressed according to their occupation in varying degrees between conventional costumes and the hunters' or cowboys' garb. When they went to Kansas City or Topeka, they wore tailored suits of the best. They were up on hats and haberdashery, as well as poker and politics. Bob Wright made trips to Boston, which was the center of the hide export business.

Even from the beginning there was an establishment of honorable homes kept by those pioneer women who went with their husbands and shared their lot. There were rough and homely women, who could walk into a saloon and bring home an inebriated husband with a strong arm; their worth consisted in a sturdy honesty, in bravery and kindness of heart. Then there were others, women of refinement and breeding, who, with the same courage and kindliness, had also the graces of the lady. Naturally the cowboys and travelers did not meet these women, who were busy with their families, and the work of pioneer housekeeping. They had a small social life of their own, with churches and visiting, picnics and dances, fishing and hunting trips with their menfolk. The casual visitor who went home and wrote of the wickedness of Dodge City, never saw these more stable and sober elements, the strong wine that would remain when the froth was blown away.

The froth was, for the time being, however, big business. Cowboys and hunters, after weeks upon the range or trail, flung away the wages of months in a few days' orgy. They bought expensive saddles, shirts and guns, such things as they could carry; and the rest they dropped into the eager hands of women and gamblers.

There was a fringe, a secondary bloc of important men in town. Gambling was a legal and semi-respectable business then, just as were saloons. Men of that profession, as always, flocked to a new town where money flowed. The Mastersons, Wyatt Earp, Luke Short, Doc Holliday, and Ben Thompson, were residents of Dodge City for a few flourishing years. Some won certain distinction in other lines before they moved on to pastures new. Luke Short became owner of a big gambling place in Fort Worth, Texas. Ben Thompson acquired unsavory fame as a killer, and was at last wiped out, in Texas. Wyatt Earp wore a marshal's badge, and with his brothers Virgil and Morgan waged a war with a gang in Arizona, helping Tombstone deserve its name.

Bat Masterson was Bill's hunting partner. Once a stranger, inquiring for him was told, "Look for the best dressed and finest looking man in the place, and that will be Bat." He often affected the Mexican fashion of wide trousers, velvet jacket, and bright-colored sash. Bat was credited with killing twenty-seven men before he became sheriff, but most of these were Indians at the battle of Adobe Walls, as the legend ran. When he left Dodge City after his term as sheriff, Masterson drifted about to other wild towns of the West, with no settled occupation. At last the law, which was getting nosey about such business, clamped down on a gambling "club" and the members scattered. Bat went to New York. Being a follower of the boxing ring, he naturally mingled with these circles, and in time became sports reporter for the *New York Telegraph.*

Dodge City had other diversions than the faro table and the dance hall. The theater, though nothing elaborate in construction, constantly offered good shows. This was possible because of the railroad main line from Kansas City to Denver. Theatrical troupes could stop over for a performance, where they would not have gone out of their way for a town of this size. Baseball and boxing were popular sports. And not a few local men were seen in the ring. Bill was an excellent amateur.

He was one of the chief organizers of the "Dodge City Fair and Driving Park association," which held a fair and race meeting each year, and races on the track at odd times.

Hunting was popular, of course, not only with guns, but with dogs, to chase antelope, wolves and jack-rabbits. Game birds offered plenty of shooting. Bill kept one or two dogs, and became interested too, in game chickens, a sport introduced by the Mexicans; though at this time he did not try to raise them.

The ancient "snipe hunt" was practiced at Dodge City for the education of tenderfeet.[18] Dodge City also had a similar game which afforded fun for some time. Some of the "gang" would take the tenderfoot out hunting. They would tell hair raising stories of Indian ferocity all the while assuring the guest there was no possible danger. Then would come another in haste, saying the Indians were "out," and while they still reassured the guest a band of "Indians" would appear suddenly over a hill, giving chase with blood curdling whoops. The hunting party would ride for their lives, enjoying hugely the terror of the tenderfoot. But one time, the victim had a gun and used it. He did not hit any of the Indians, but his shot came uncomfortably close and the sport declined thereafter.

Practical jokes, although not very funny except to their perpetrators were a part of the town's history, distinctive, and a mirthful saga such as no other frontier town enjoyed.

There was the time Mysterious Dave professed religion, then declared his intention of shooting the preacher and a number of others who testified they were saved and ready for heaven. He would send them, said Dave, "so they could go straight to heaven while their souls were clean." His first shot put out the light. The meeting broke up in a panicked scramble, while

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[18] The victim is taken out at night, stationed at a convenient place, and given a grain sack, which he is told to hold open, while the rest of the party drive the snipe into it. Of course, they go off home, leaving him "holding the sack."

Dave walked out sneering, "You're all a bunch of hypocrites."

There was the time that Moses Waters dropped a bucket of water on the Fort Dodge sutler, wearing a brand new suit. The sutler, to get even, hired a tall Missouri youth looking for work, to whitewash "his" barn – the big red barn that was Waters's pride.

"If an Irishmen comes around and says he owns it, just turn the whitewash over him and I'll give you an extra dollar." And so it fell out. Waters, horrified and wrathful, went from words to blows, and then got the worst of it, with the whitewash bucket jammed over his head. The young fellow wanted to earn that extra dollar.

When the garrison was withdrawn from Fort Dodge, Bob Wright was made custodian, and once a year two army officers would come to inspect the property. It was his custom to give a game dinner in their honor. The event fell in december.

Now it chanced once, on the morning before the dinner, that Bill rode out with Chalk Beeson to see his cattle. And where a haystack had just been removed in feeding, they saw a green vine, with two fine melons. The hay had been stacked over it in summer, and protected it from the fall frost, while the roots still drew nourishment.

"It's a pie melon," said Mr. Beeson, inspecting it carefully. A pie melon, be it said, so much resembles a watermelon that a close look is needed even to distinguish either the vines or melons. It has a thick, rather hard rind, and a greenish pulp that is good only when cooked with spices and sugar, for pie filling or sauce.

Bill tapped it with judicial finger. "Too bad it isn't a watermelon," he said. "It would be fine for Bob's dinner tonight. . . Huh . . say . . let's take them in . ."

Back in town Mr. Beeson tied his team on a side street, and Bill strolled into Mr. Wright's store.

"Bob," he said mysteriously, "Chalk Beeson has found two ripe watermelons on a vine under a haystack; and he's got them in the back of his buggy."

He expatiated on the wonder of a watermelon in december, and the strange way these had been kept. He mentioned exactly where the buggy was standing. Then he departed.

Civic and personal pride swelled in Mr. Wright. A triumph for Dodge City. Even Kansas City and Chicago could not produce the like, for refrigerator cars were yet unknown. And what a climax for his banquet that night! He put on his overcoat and walked out. Not a soul was in sight as Mr. Wright abstracted the melons from the back of Beeson's buggy, rolled them in a blanket and hurried to the hotel. There he arranged with the waiter exactly how this *piece de resistance* should be served. He spent the afternoon preparing a fitting speech.

Bill and Beeson, having seen the purloining of the melons, spent their afternoon in calling upon all the other invited guests.

There was hilarity and joyous anticipation at the dinner that night. The game course and other delicacies were served and appreciated; the plates cleared, and the waiter placed before the host the larger melon, resting on a big silver platter. Beside it he laid a long carving knife. The smiles of astonishment were uplifting to Mr. Wright. He rose to the occasion with his prepared speech. He boasted gracefully of this epicurean triumph, which Dodge City alone could display. Amid a salvo of applause, he took up the knife, laid it across the fruit.

It did not cut. Again he tried, and again, nervously conscious of suppressed smiles. Then, as he bore down, the melon skidded, crashed to the floor. It broke open, showing the greenish-white interior, speckled with brown seeds.

Laughter, till now controlled, burst forth in howls. Amid the tumult, Mr. Wright glanced down, saw, and understood. Crimson to the ears, he looked at the yelling company, then said, disgustedly – no ladies being present –

"That's a hell of a joke!"

Colonel Foster, who had been making the inspection visit for several years, shook his host's hand warmly in farewell.

"The most delightful dinner you've ever given, sir!"

Mr. Wright had been jarred at first. But he was a game sport. He had recovered his aplomb, and he grinned.

"The honors go to Bill and Beeson, I think," he said.

A Home To Keep

Bill, in 1875, had taken a claim on Bluff creek, and built a dugout, sheds and corral, improvements required by law. He bought a small herd of cattle, which could range there with occasional looking after. The buffalo were nearly gone, and he realized that he must look for other livelihood.

Meeting his friend Joe Robinson at Dodge City, he asked for news.

"The biggest news," said Joe, grinning, "is that I'm married." His bride was the dark-eyed Flora Kendall (*see plate* 4) whom Bill had met two years before at the dance at Sun City. The gangling girl he remembered had blossomed into a radiant maturity at sixteen . . Joe was still hunting. There were buffalo, he said, below Kiowa creek. He guessed he'd build a dugout down there, somewhere.

"You might use mine," said Bill "and keep an eye on my cattle."

Robinson liked the plan. "It's safe enough from Indians now, and I can take my wife. Her mother don't approve of me, and she can't go home."

Six months later came word that Joe was killed when a horse fell with him. Alone, with a child coming, the young widow had been taken in by a family at Sun City "till she could go to her folks." But it was from Bill that she received aid. He found a place where she could stay, paid for her board and care. One year later, 1877, they were married.

They lived in the dugout on the claim. Bill's herd of cattle had increased, and now he formed a partnership with Neal Brown. He built a small frame house, and other improvements. When he became undersheriff for Bat Masterson, he himself remained most of the time in town. Then, in september, after four years quietude, came the word, "The Indians are out!"

Colonel William H. Lewis, commandant at Fort Dodge summoned Bill.

"I want you to do some scouting," he said. Colonel Lewis had reports of the Indians toward the southwest, plundering and killing one man near Belle Meade. This was a band of Northern Cheyenne, who had been moved south the year before, to the Cheyenne reservation. The change of climate, shortage of food, bore heavily. Many died from sickness. At last, they broke away, under the leadership of Dull Knife, a band of about three hundred in all; ninety-two men, with women and children. They lacked supplies of all kinds, and on reaching the settlements and ranches began to plunder. They killed cattle, and stopped for a few days, while the women worked feverishly to dry meat and tan hides.

Colonel Lewis believed that there were nearly two hundred warriors. He had already sent a detachment of troops to meet them, and he now despatched the best men he could call, for scouts: Bill Tilghman, Joshua Webb, A. J. Anthony and Bob Wright.

Before they reached the soldiers, however, these had a slight battle with the Indians on Sand creek. They remained in camp two days, then found to their chagrin that the Indians had fled the first night. The scouts found they had crossed the Arkansas. Colonel Lewis then took the field himself, joining the soldiers who were trailing the band.

Bill made a brief scouting trip, reporting the route and location of the Indians, and was then sent back to the fort. Before he returned to the field force, they had come up with the Indians on White Woman creek, late in the evening. Colonel Lewis placed his men ready for a morning attack, and making a last inspection, he was killed by a shot from an Indian outpost. This ended the campaign. The troops returned, and the Cheyenne went on, killing about forty people in Kansas. They reached their old home in the north, but were captured by troops, early in the winter.

Bill had undertaken the scouting with an easy mind, for Colonel Lewis assured him the Indians were southwest, and thus well away from his ranch and home. But the Colonel was not aware that they had split into several bunches. Neal Brown, at the ranch, had just time to hurry his wife and Flora Tilghman, with their children, into a wagon. Driving at a run for Dodge City, they looked back to see the Indians arrive, and soon the smoke of the burning buildings.

Clothes and household goods were lost, but Bill regretted most his large collection of Indian curios which could not be replaced, including the blanket which had been left on the sand bar, when he had killed the pony of its owner. He had also a white woman's scalp, with long, golden hair.

Thereafter they established a home in town. There was another baby now, little James. When Masterson's term as sheriff ended, Bill, too, was out of a job.

But the Arizona and Pacific railroad, then building across New Mexico, was offering what seemed fabulous wages, especially for men with teams; twenty dollars a day. Bill had experience with that work.

He determined to take Flora and the children back to Atchison for a visit with the folks, their first meeting. Also, he would ship his beloved horse, Chief, to be kept safely by his father. Bill, after a brief stay at Atchison, departed for New Mexico.

The wages that had appeared so big in Kansas, proved little above the cost of feed for horse and man. Bill worked for a time hauling ties, cedar trees which were cut in the mountains. Buying supplies for the tie camp, he learned the real cost of food, wholesale, and saw a better opportunity. Soon he had set up a tent eating-house near the graders' camp. He hired a Mexican helper, and presently had a flourishing business. He was his own cook, and provided not only meat and potatoes and beans, but pies and puddings which won great approval. Water he bought from the nearest village of the Mexicans. It was brought up from a well one hundred feet deep, dug, and walled with rock, and fitted with a strong derrick and pulley. The "old oaken bucket" was a half-size barrel, with a bullock hitched to the rope to pull it up.

Bill had a very good horse with him, and matched several races, including one against the local pride. He won. But that evening, the grading contractor came to Bill's restaurant.

"That big guy they call 'Arizona' lost a bit of money on their horse, and he's down there, drinking, and swearing he'll kill you. He's a bad man, all right, and a quick shooter."

"Thanks. I'll watch out for him," said Bill.

His Mexican helper warned him. "Senor Beel," he said, *"Es un hombre muy malo.* He kill Mexicans, he kill three white men. He say he kill you. You better go 'way?"

Bill's voice was soft, and he replied in the liquid Spanish which he now spoke easily.

"No, Miguel. I hope I don't meet him. But I'm not running away."

Arizona did not come to find him. But three days later, Bill rode the work-train back to Albuquerque to see about some supplies. When he returned, stepping off, he found himself face to face with the enemy. The *"malo hombre"* wasted no time.

". . you! We don't want you in this country, and I'll clean you out right now."

The two shots could scarcely be distinguished. It was felt unnecessary to hold an inquest.

Things were peaceful for a week. Then, two fellows, drunk enough to be ambitious, thought it would be fun to empty the large dishes of food which were set upon the table for dinner. Bill's fist sent one man down. The other reached for his gun. But he was suddenly sobered to find Bill's gun poked at his stomach before his own was out of the holster.

"Get out of here, both of you!" he said. And they went.

Bill had learned watchfulness, however, and that same afternoon, he espied the two coming cautiously toward his tent. Evidently they hoped to surprise him. Bill grabbed his shotgun, and ran, stooping, to a large stump about thirty feet from the tent. The two sneaked up, intent on their goal, when he rose suddenly beside them, with leveled gun.

"You get away, and don't come back here any more!" he commanded. But bluff did not work. They were out for blood. Half a dozen shots was their answer.

"Take that for Arizona!" yelled one.

Bullets plunked into the stump as Bill ducked. But a shot-gun is a terrible weapon at close range. The avenger of Arizona spent two months in bed. With time to think about it, he decided vengeance wasn't so important. The other fellow got a shot in the shoulder from Bill's six-shooter, and he also lost interest. Bill's business prospered, with no more troublesome customers.

Letters from Atchison brought news, glad and sorrowful. Little Jim, eighteen months old, was gone; a cold, pneumonia, perhaps. Bill went about his cooking with a strange, numb sense of loss. It was hard to realize, afar off. But Flora was coming out to New Mexico. She could come all the way by rail, if he could get a permit for her to ride the work train. She felt well. She was sure she'd be all right.

So Bill fixed up a better living tent, and was ready to welcome her and little Charles. Soon, at Old Fort Wingate, where the main railroad camp was pitched and Bill had his eating place, his daughter, Dot, was born. It was easier then not to keep thinking of little Jim.

When the railroad work was completed, they returned to Dodge City, after an absence of a little more than a year. Neal Brown had been looking after the cattle, and there was a nice increase. Bill brought some savings home, and now he bought two hundred acres between Dodge City and the fort, formerly part of the military reservation. It was rich, bottom land, running down to the river.

The next fall he went to the state fair at Topeka, and on to Kansas City. He bought a Hereford bull, and two heifers and ten Jersey cows and heifers, and one bull, all being pedigreed stock.[19]

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[19] Clipping from Dodge City newspaper.

When Pat Sughrue was elected sheriff in 1882, he promptly made Bill his deputy.

William and Amanda had come to live at Dodge City (*see plate* 2). Josie and Hattie were skilled dressmakers, and helped out their father's small pension money in this way. They took care, too, that little Dottie Tilghman should be always nicely dressed. Amanda had taken the two orphan girls of Dick. They were well grown now, and Ettie married at sixteen.

His family, his farm and stock, a day or two fishing on Bluff or Wolf creek; hunting; trips to Kansas City, a racing partnership with Neal Brown; the Fair and Driving park, which was the race track, where they kept their small string in training; baseball and boxing matches; these were Bill's life aside from official work in the next seven years. He was one of the promoters of the famous Mexican bull fight, heralded as the only one ever staged in the United States.

Fraternal orders were extending to the frontier, and Bill became a member of the Masons and of the Oddfellows. He was one of the team who went to Ashland to install the Oddfellows' lodge there in 1887.

The three-room cottage was replaced by a six-room house, and Bill bought furniture at Kansas City, for the parlor and dining room in the best quality and styles of the period; walnut, with marble tops; and a heavy velvet carpet.

It was at Christmas, 1884 that Bill turned from the surveillance of the obstreperous element, to an unusual festivity. Home Christmas trees were almost unheard of. Evergreen could be secured only by a long trip to the Cimarron river, where cedars grew, or by a special order from Denver. But Bill got a tree, trimmed it himself, and placed gifts on it for all the family. The Dodge City *Comet* wrote up this event.

"On Christmas day we were invited over to City Marshal Tilghman's residence, and there gazed on as fine a Christmas tree as has been our pleasure to look at for some time. The tree reached to the ceiling of the room, and was covered with presents from top to bottom, among which were the following: Mrs. W. Tilghman, gold watch and chain; Mrs. W. M. Tilghman, Sr., silver caster;" and so on, listing gifts for his father, brother and sisters, nieces, the children and W. N. Locke.

"The tree was put up and trimmed by Mr. Tilghman's own hands, and was a surprise to all the guests. Bill is an adept at fixing such things. After the presents were distributed, the guests were all invited to the dining room where a magnificent dinner was waiting."

Such gatherings of families and friends were the chief social life of the time, either for special events, or just sunday visiting. Side by side with its wilder activities, such a life flourished and took root in Dodge City. W. N. Locke, of the Christmas party, not long afterward married Bill's sister, Josie.

Cow-Town Marshal

The tide of longhorns grew. Three hundred thousand came up the trail that year of 1884, and five hundred thousand the next. In april, Bob Wright became mayor of Dodge City, and he pondered the problem of keeping the wild cowboys, gamblers and desperadoes in order.

"Pat," he said to Sheriff Sughrue, "I need Bill Tilghman. You can get other good men to range over the county, but they can't handle these tin-horns and long-horns in town. He can still be your deputy."

"Bill can handle them," agreed Sughrue. "See what he says."

So it came about that Bill became city marshal of Dodge. Mr. Sughrue insisted that he keep his deputy's commission, although released from active duty, and without regular pay.

The citizens of Dodge City made a collection to buy Bill a handsome badge. The local jeweler had none in stock, so he made one out of three twenty-dollar gold pieces, suspended from a gold bar. It bore the inscription, "City Marshal"; on the reverse, "William Tilghman, from your many friends. Dodge City, 1884."

Bill wore it proudly. In four years of official work, he had become devoted to his profession. He had never read a book on psychology – it wasn't even in college curricula then. But the study of men fascinated him, and in his work the strong sense of justice, the devotion to the government which was his birthright and heritage, now had play.

Nor was his work alone with the criminal or the obstreperous visitor. All police work of the town was in his hands. He checked the water barrels kept for fire, to see that they were always full. He looked after such sanitary regulations as were made in those days. He kept surveillance on the dance hall women. He watched over boys. He collected licenses and fees for the city, and his accounts were correct to the penny. Though not official duty, he helped sick or destitute travelers, often with the price of a meal from his own pocket; or, if a family, heading a collection for them. There was no organized charity or welfare work, but from its beginnings Dodge City was known for its generosity. Cowboys and hunters as well as local citizens, were always ready to toss coins into the hat.

"It's day all day in the daytime, and never night, in Dodge" the saying ran. So Bill, with one assistant, took turns on duty. When the ordinary business houses of the town closed, the night life was just well started. These places were open twenty-four hours a day, but had a slack period from about four to ten A.M. Bill therefore made his own hours, generally from three to three, taking in the heavy period of the night.

He made the rounds of the principal streets, looked in the saloons and gambling places, The Alamo, The Lone Star, "Kelley's Place that Keeps Kelley"; The Lady Gay theater and the variety show. He strolled through the red light district, south of the tracks, where a fight might break out as well as at the saloons. He watched the crowds in the dance halls, and at the gambling tables; on the streets, noting with quick eye a furtive air that meant mischief, a drunk or a horse that might be stolen. He was usually on the streets by noon, on private business, perhaps, but keeping an eye for official matters as well.

His assistant was Tom Nixon, from whom Bill was buying horse feed when the surveyors arrived to lay out the townsite. Nobody knew much of "Mysterious Dave" Mathers, which was probably the reason for his nickname. But they did know he was a quick shooter and a hard man. The preacher, whose misadventure is related elsewhere, had chosen him as the wickedest man he could find, to be a shining subject for conversion. Dave hunted buffalo, and he ran a dance hall for a time.

Now Bill noted dark looks and suspicious glances from his deputy. Dave swaggered in the saloon, ostentatiously ignoring Nixon, who presently went out. Bill followed.

"What's wrong, Tom?" Nixon swore deeply.

"It's my wife," he said. "And Dave Mathers. He's got to stay away from there!"

"You don't know anything, do you?"

"No. But he's hanging around . ."

Bill talked with him; tried to appease his distrust. Matters drifted for some time. Then, a sudden flare-up of jealousy, hot words between the two men, and Nixon fired at Dave.

"You ought to shoot straight, or not at all, with a man like Dave," said Bill. "Watch out, now. He'll get you."

He himself watched narrowly, and he urged Nixon to move to Colorado. The deputy refused. Four days later, as Bill sat eating supper at home, a shot sounded. He sprang up.

"Dave's killed Nixon," he said. A crowd was running. A man lay sprawled in the dust. Bill, as he also ran up the street, flashed quick glances. Dave Mathers was not in sight. Nixon's body was still. Bill leaped over it, up on the porch of the saloon, and in the door. Half way through the long room, Mysterious Dave was walking toward the back door. Lightly, pantherlike, Bill was behind him, his gun out.

"Put up your hands, Dave!" he said.

"I expected him to shoot it out," he acknowledged, afterwards. But Dave had no mind to try that when Bill had the drop on him.

"You're damned quick," he said, as he handed over his gun. He was acquitted on plea of self-defense, for the shoot-on-sight situation between him and Nixon was well known. Then Mysterious Dave left town. But he vowed to kill the marshal for arresting him. And whatever his evil ways, Dave Mathers was known as a man of his word.

Bill's new assistant was Ben Daniels, a cool and efficient hand, who, in after years, was a member of Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders, in the Spanish war. As president, Mr. Roosevelt made Daniels U.S. marshal for Arizona.

Dave Mathers did come back, bent on revenge. He brought with him a veritable arsenal; six-shooters, a rifle, shotgun, and a supply of ammunition. Perhaps it was because of this heavy baggage that he put off action. He rented a room upstairs, in a lodging house, and thereby was caught in a trap of his own making. For his only entrance was by an open, outside stairway. From a sheltered position, a hundred feet away, a marksman could pick him off, infallibly. Night offered no safety, for a street lamp shone full on the side of the building.

Bill, Ben Daniels, and Dr. Chouteau, who was also on Dave's black list, took turns watching that stairway. Dave could not even come down for food, without plunging into a deadly line of fire. He was brave, but not foolhardy. He held out for nearly a week.

Then, at last, a white handkerchief waved cautiously from the window. Ben Daniels who was "on duty" kept his gun ready, while Bill and Dr. Chouteau moved nearer, to hold parley. If Dave would come down the stairway with his hands up, and no weapons about him, they would escort him to the station for the next train, east or west. He would promise never to come back. Dave agreed, and so it was carried out.

Six months later, Bill stood registering at the desk of a hotel in Kansas City. He felt a hand on his shoulder, and, turning, faced Mysterious Dave.

"I felt mighty queer," he confessed later. But Dave only said, "How are you, Bill?" He asked the news of Dodge City, and they talked for fifteen minutes. Then Dave passed on. Bill never saw nor heard of him again.

The cowboys came racing into town, across the bridge which the county had built across the Arkansas river. Less than half a mile took them to the railroad, and Front street. They came spurring their horses, and uttering their wildest yells. Often they yelled equally when they left, being well tanked up with whiskey. And they fired their six-guns.

But in town, they met with a city ordinance. "Dodge City is one town you can't shoot up," the saying ran. Newcomers who did not know the custom, were met by the marshal and politely told that they must leave their guns at Mayor Wright's store, taking a receipt for them. When they were ready to leave town, they could have their property. This rule had been established after Jack Bridges, a marshal before Bill, had killed one cowboy; and Ed Masterson, also city marshal, had met his death. Bridges had used his buffalo gun, as the yelling, shooting cowboys raced toward the bridge. They had begun by shooting promiscuously into the buildings and the street. Bridges made a long shot, and "probably a chance one," records Mr. Wright.[20] But the cowboy was effectively dead. Other cowboys threatened revenge. But the citizens backed up the officer, and a coroner's jury said "justifiable homicide." Guns by the hundred were piled on Mr. Wright's shelves at times.

Nevertheless, knives and fists and chairs were at hand, and there were fights. Now and then someone would sneak in a gun. And if any cowboy departed in particular wrath, he was likely to secure his guns and try some shooting as he went.

On one occasion, two cowboys found themselves brave enough, after several drinks, to exhibit some fancy shooting in the street. At Bill's command to desist, they turned their guns on him. The plunging of their horses made them hard to hit, but a shot from his six-shooter crashing through the saddle horn gave one of them pause. He was not too drunk to get the message of that bullet. Mayor Wright seized a shot-gun and ran to aid. He found the two dismounted and handing their guns over to the marshal. Mr. Wright remonstrated.

"Why didn't you call for help? Two to one is big odds. They might have shot you."

"I called on them to surrender, and I thought I could handle them," said Bill quietly.

"The efficiency of an officer on police duty is best rated by the trouble that does NOT arise on his beat." From his own experience, Bill laid down this principle when, years later, he was called to direct the large police force of Oklahoma City. His handling of the wild and transient crowds of Dodge City was, therefore, not a display of his prowess with guns, or browbeating, or killing some one every now and then. He hated killing and took long chances to avoid it. Sure of his quickness, judging the opponent keenly, he waited until the last half-second to fire. And after fifty years, he said, "I never shot at a man in my life, and missed him."

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[20] Dodge City, The Cowboy Capital; by Robert M. Wright; privately printed, 1913; p. 174.

Mostly a quiet word, a quick seizure of the gun wrist, throwing the man's hand and gun up above his head, and thus ineffective, a knockout blow with the fist, or gunbarrel[21] would handle the situation.

Always men spoke of his quietness, his unassuming manner, his easy speech. But when they looked in his eye, heard the ring of command in the easy words, not many would face him out. He watched for trouble as a life-guard watches his crowd; not looking for a near-drowning and spectacular rescue, but spotting first signs, which the layman seldom sees. So, in the highest years of the cattle drives, Bill kept the peace in Dodge City, and his name was heard throughout the cattle country from the Rio Grande to Canada.

"Enjoy yourselves, boys, but don't make trouble," he would say.

One day excitement promised. Two strange men appeared in Dodge. They had heard the fame of Dodge City's marshal, and in the saloon they boldly announced that they had come to "settle his hash."

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[21] "You hit a man over the head with the barrel of a forty-five, not with the butt, as the writers put it," he said.

They would take his guns and kick him out in the street. And if he thought he could shoot, they would fill him so full of lead that the town would need a new marshal. So they drank and boasted. Word was soon carried to Bill.

"Well, if my time's come, I might as well get it over with," he said. "Which saloon are they in now?"

The two were sitting at a table with drinks when he entered. The rest of the customers scurried to the sides, out of the line of fire. There was a breathless hush. Selecting his men at a glance, Bill walked to their table and said in his quiet voice: "Boys, give me your guns. They're not allowed while you're in town." His own gun rested in his holster.

Now was the great moment. To the amazement of the spectators, taut for a thrilling scene, the two bad men handed over their guns without a word. Bill put them in his pockets, and then invited his would-be assassins to step up to the bar for a drink. As they received their glasses, he turned away.

"You can get your guns at Wright's store when you're ready to leave," he said.

The men talked no more of settling the marshal. They left town that night, and were never seen in Dodge City again. Who they were, why they wanted to kill Bill Tilghman, and why they surrendered in such a lamb-like manner, never was explained.

Dr. O. H. Simpson, dentist, who came to Dodge City in 1885, became an interested student of local history. Dr. Simpson wrote shortly after Bill's death:

"I was much interested in Western life, and in talking with citizens generally, I found that a very large per cent of gun fighter's courage was questioned by the people who knew them well. So I would say to substantial men like Dr. McCarty, R. W. Evans, George Hoover, and Bob Wright, 'Who of the gun fighters are not counterfeits? That will fight when the fight comes up, regardless of the odds, and not pick their adversary?' Their lists varied, but two names stood at the head of every list: Bill Tilghman and Wyatt Earp."

In january, 1886, came the great blizzard which, with continuing cold and storms, killed cattle by the thousands and brought ruin to the Kansas ranges. In that same year also, the "dead line" or limit for driving Texas cattle, was moved westward to the Colorado line. Dodge City's cattle days were ended.

Bill resigned as city marshal, and devoted himself to his farms and stock. Like others, he had lost most of his range cattle, but he still had some of his pure bred stock sheltered at his farm near Fort Dodge.

Hard times descended upon Western Kansas.

Ballots for County Seats

Trail days were ended for Dodge City, and its ebullient reign as the great cow town of the West. The country was filling up with farmers. Their fields must be protected from roving herds, their cattle from the infection of Texas fever. A strange sobriety settled over Dodge. The roistering of the cowboys and the careless golden stream of their wages was no more. The gambling and dance halls starved out. They found few customers among the settlers who must pinch every frugal penny.

Town promoting, however, flourished. A quarter section could be bought for a few hundred dollars, platted into town lots, and–if sold–would bring thousands. First step to prominence was to become a county seat. With this attained, each aspiring hamlet dreamed that it would be the plains metropolis. Nearly a dozen county seat fights raged, all marked with bitterness, some with bloodshed. County seat elections became a school for political tricks.

Dodge City held its county seat securely. In Garfield county, Eminence and Ravanna[22] fought for the position, and at the election, Eminence hired Bat Masterson, with twenty deputies, to guard the polls. Bill, of course, was one of them. The election was quiet. And the rival town, Ravanna, won. At another election Eminence was the victor.

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[22] Blanchard; Leola Howard; *Conquest of southwest Kansas;* privately printed, 1931; p. 102.

Northwest of Dodge City, in Wichita county, rival companies set up the towns of Leoti and Coronado, a mile and a quarter distant. Farmer City sprung up between them, hoping to be a compromise seat, when the other two should have killed each other off.

Leoti raised seven hundred and fifty dollars and hired Charles Coulter of Fort Wallace, a gunman of some reputation, with two assistants, to guard the polls. Citizens of Coronado therefore, stayed away. Leoti won, elected officers and built a courthouse. Coronado, declaring the election illegal, held one of its own, and likewise set up a courthouse. Then, in a night raid, the Coronads carried off the county records from Leoti. In a little while, the men of Leoti staged a similar coup. They set a guard at their courthouse, and defeated another raid of the Coronads. All this was without bloodshed.

Peace was agreed, but a party of men going from Leoti to Coronado was fired upon, and eleven men killed. The governor called the national guard. Two brothers named Hubbard were tried in another county, and sentenced for life. A mob at Dighton, Kansas, hanged them.

Next year another election was held, and Leoti sent to Dodge City for Bill Tilghman and Pat Sughrue, who remained for several weeks. The election passed off quietly.

Here, however, Ed Prather, a former Atchison man, who had killed an old man at Dodge City, and a deputy at the town of Ulysses, declared that he would "do up the town and Bill Tilghman, too." Bill had often helped him, but he was not grateful, only bitterly jealous of Bill's standing and success. Then too, Bill's sister Hattie had turned down his advances and he blamed Bill for that.

Bill failed to see him, and thought he had left town. With the doctor, he went into the saloon, the only place that had any ice, for a cold drink. Here he came face to face with Prather, who at once started to draw his gun. After telling him three times to halt, Bill fired.[23]

In Gray county, just west of Dodge City, the county seat fight between the towns of Cimarron and Ingalls was enlivened by the golden touch of a rich man. Asa T. Soule was the proprietor of Hop Bitters, a famous patent medicine. Mr. Soule backed large schemes for developing the country. One was a railroad to the towns of Ensign and Montezuma. The county seat rivals, Cimarron and Ingalls, were both on the main line of the Santa Fe.

Another Soule enterprise was a mill at Ingalls, to make sugar from sorghum cane. For Dodge City, a bank, and a college, the latter a substantial building on the hills north of town. Today, after many vicissitudes, it is a Catholic convent and school. Then Soule planned a ninety-mile irrigation canal starting at Ingalls, running to a point east of Dodge City. This was completed, but its operation was not successful. It was revived about 1910 or 1912 but soon was destroyed by floods.

Mr. Soule welcomed Bill cordially in his bank office.

"You sent for me?" said Bill.

The talk drifted to the affairs of Gray county. Mr. Soule, of course, favored Ingalls. But–he shook his head gravely–those Cimarron people were capable of any crookedness. It was lawful to have watchers at the polls.

"Now, we thought that you would be the best man there. You could keep order, and you know almost everybody. You could spot illegal voters. We would pay, of course. And we should have several others."

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[23] Details of this episode are from a letter of F. A. Spencer, one of the guards at Leoti; personal information from Fred Sutton, and official proceedings of the coroner's inquest.

Bill got his men: Bat Masterson, Ben Daniels, Eat-em-up Jake, and George and John Gilbert, brothers, who came from Rochester, New York, Mr. Soule's home town. The six were stationed to watch the election at Cimarron, which passed off quietly. The returns showed Cimarron winner in spite, as it bosated, of shameless use of the Montezuma railroad laborers, who were shifted into the county and voted for Ingalls.

"Fraud yourself!" retorted Ingalls; and obtained a court order to prevent the certification of the election to Cimarron. This was in the fall of 1887, and the war dragged through the following year, with one court case after another, the county records shifted back and forth, as one or the other won a decision. No killings, but several fights, and the newspapers kept up a violent battle of ink. At last, the supreme court of Kansas settled it in favor of Ingalls, with one justice dissenting and two affirming. One of the two later said: "We decided that there was a *little* more fraud committed by Cimarron than by Ingalls."

Election frauds are hard to prove, even though everybody knows about them. The Cimarron people, however, had been a little too smart. It began though, with a group of farmers who formed the Foote Township Equalization society with seventy-two members. They were bound by oath to keep their proceedings secret, and to deliver the goods—the entire vote of Foote township. They bargained with the Cimarron boosters for the sum of ten thousand dollars which was to be equally divided among the association members. A committee met with fifteen of the leading men of Cimarron, who signed a bond for the amount. One by one, each signed the document, and the farmers were satisfied. On election day, they voted as agreed.

Then they called for their money, and were met by a bland refusal.

"Those signatures on the bond . ."

"Are forgeries!" said the men of Cimarron.

The association sued for collection. And lost their case. For, as was proved in court, the city slickers had outfoxed them. Each man, as he signed the bond, had written the name of another one of the fifteen.

The bond was worthless. But the buying of votes was proved, was admitted, and fixed in the court records. Therefore the justices could say, "There was a *little* more fraud in Cimarron."

But one more episode occurred before the supreme court had rendered the final judgment. In the fall of 1888, the Ingalls faction had elected most of the county officers, and the election was upheld by the courts. The county records, however, were at Cimarron, which refused to give them up. The Ingalls men sought Bill.

"Mr. Tilghman," they said, "We want you to get those records for us."

"They offered to pay pretty well for it, so we made the deal," said Bill. One thousand dollars was a goodly sum in those days. But from this he had to pay his aides. Bill picked his men: Neal Brown, Wyatt Earp, Fred Singer, Ed Brooks and George Bolds. The Ingalls sheriff made them all deputies. They were not going against the law.

On a frosty sunday in january, the six men, in a spring wagon, drove up to the court house at Cimarron. Bill had picked sunday, because, as he said, "Most of the men in town would be sleeping off their saturday night drunk."

Four of them went upstairs. It was easy enough to open the flimsy doors. It took several trips for all four to carry the record books down.

"This is all of them!" cried Wyatt Earp.

A shot sounded.

A citizen of Cimarron, awaking with a terrible head, felt that he must have a bracer. He set out for the saloon. There was a spring wagon before the court house. A man came out bearing an armful of large books. The citizen blinked. Slowly his aching head registered.

"They're stealing the records!" he yelped. Back up the street he raced, crying his alarm. Guns were handy. Storekeepers and householders who had been hovering by the stoves, came popping out, sought vantage posts by trees or buildings. A fusillade met Bill and Earp and Fred Singer as they flung the last books into the wagon. A bullet hit Neal Brown, but he held the plunging team.

"Let 'em go!" yelled Bill, snatching his rifle. The four men were in the wagon, their own guns crackling.

Bill received a bullet in the calf of his leg, the only time he was ever touched by gun-fire. Ed Brooks too was wounded. George Bolds was hit by three slugs, but had no serious hurt.

"It was as many bullets as I ever faced at one time," said Bill. "They were flying pretty thick. But we carried off the records and delivered them as per contract."

Several Ingalls men, not of the posse, had slipped into Cimarron and taken positions of vantage. Their fire added to the battle. Four Cimarron men were wounded, two of them severely, and one killed instantly. Two of the Ingalls men were wounded. Their retreat cut off, this party got to the court house, and there stood siege until late afternoon. They surrendered on promise of safety, and the men of Cimarron delivered them to the sheriff. He, being an Ingalls man, just turned them loose.

Bill's coup, which was soon followed by the handing down of the supreme court's decision in favor of Ingalls, made that the county seat, both in law and fact. It held the honor for five years. In 1893, a year of hard times, another election was held, in which Cimarron was winner.

Asa Soule was dead, and his money no longer fed the flames. The boom was more than dead. Populism, the protest of the suffering, was at its height, and the rosy hopes of prosperous cities which had once seemed worth fighting for, now were bitterly remembered dreams.

But Bill's exploit of taking the records became one of the legends of western Kansas.

The boom burst in western Kansas. The cattlemen had been hard hit by the terrible winter of 1886. The settlers crowding in, knew nothing of dry farming. They planted corn, only to see it wither in the hot winds, or dry into scrawny nubbins. They grew sorghum cane, but they could not live on molasses.

Said one of these, hardily cheerful: "We got along all right last year, and expected to this year. But our dog died. And you know it takes a darned good dog to catch rabbits."

They gathered the dry bones of the buffalo, for which there was a market, and this tided some of them through. Some hung on for four or five years, only to give up at last. The towns withered with their trade support so broken.

Many farms were mortgaged at inflated values. Land that had been worth thousands could not even be made to produce its own taxes. Bill, who had refused forty thousand dollars for his land along the Arkansas river eventually lost part of it by tax sale.

A New Frontier — Oklahoma

Now the long battle of the Boomers reached fulfilment. The Unassigned lands, Oklahoma, were to be opened, april 22, 1889. And many men of western Kansas turned their eyes thither. Fred Sutton had joined Captain David L. Payne's boomer organization. From Kiowa came a red-headed young editor, to be first postmaster at Guthrie–Dennis Flynn, with Irish wit and golden speech and a great heart, whom the Territory was to know affectionately as "Our Dennis." As delegate to congress, though without a vote, he won the battle for free homes.[24]

There was Charlie Colcord, an ex-cattle-man who stayed and boosted during hard years and good.

A one-time editor came from Medicine Lodge, entrusted with the keeping of the territorial funds. In a time when "banker" often signified skinflint and oppressor, he was "Uncle Joe McNeal." From Garden City was Dick T. Morgan, a member of congress after statehood; A. G. C. Bierer, of the territorial supreme court; John H. Cotteral, who went from the state bench to the federal and rose to the U.S. circuit court. J. C. Strang, judge and state senator in Kansas, judge in Oklahoma and secretary of the territory, whose daughter became the wife of Governor M. E. Trapp, came from Larned; as did Bayard T. Hainer of the territorial supreme court. Cash Cade, banker at Shawnee and Republican political leader, came from Coldwater. And from Kinsley came Amos Ewing, who settled at Kingfisher, Oklahoma, to be a power in the Republican party, member of the senate before and after statehood, a judge, and subject of picturesque legends. He was reputed to be as good at poker as at law and politics.

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[24] Settlers in the strip and later openings were required to pay for their land as well as fulfill the Homestead Act requirements. Mr. Flynn demanded for them free lands, on the same terms as earlier settlers.

Hundreds of others, of no public distinction, came to the new land. Neal Brown, Bill's partner, followed him, and their association continued for many years. And Henry Garris, with whom he hunted buffalo, came. Fred Sutton became general agent for the Anheuser-Busch company of St. Louis, and for a time ran an establishment in Guthrie known as the Turf Exchange.

Bill put what money he could scrape into construction of a building in Guthrie, which Sutton leased. He came to Guthrie on the train on the day after the Run, and secured some town lots. The city was chaos. On the day of the Run, the Santa Fe ran fifteen trains from Arkansas City, Kansas, and five from Purcell, on the south, all jammed and loaded on platforms and roofs. Guthrie and Oklahoma City each had ten thousand to fifteen thousand persons before nightfall. Spread all along the tracks at Guthrie were the goods shipped in, building materials, store supplies, household goods. The railroad dumped them on the right-of-way and put out the word, "Everybody come and get his own stuff." And it is recorded that in that vast confusion, and with the thousands of men thrown together, there was no looting or theft.

The townsite of Guthrie had been set aside by the government, but no survey made. Nobody knew whether he was on lots or in the street. On the second day after the opening, an assembly was held on the Government square. No better story of this time can be written than that of Frank Greer, whose newspaper, the *State Capital,* was on the streets – pre-printed – on the first day, and within a week, regularly coming from its own press. Both Greer and his newspaper were important figures in the making of the Territory. He wrote:

> The people gathered around a farm wagon. Colonel Constantine, who had been speaker of the house of the Wisconsin legislature, presided. He had a voice that reached the utmost confines of the crowd, and presided with a kindly genius that kept everybody in good order.
>
> About twenty feet from the chairman stood a woman – one of the only three women on the townsite. She raised her hand and said, "Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that in starting the foundation of an embryo city like this, and the commonwealth we hope to build here, it is only fitting to call on God to give his blessing upon the efforts of the people who are to make the first history of the city and the state." The chairman asked this woman to make the prayer, which she did in the fervent and truly religious spirit of the pioneer woman.

This was Frank Greer's own mother. The meeting chose a committee of fifty to select a mayor and other officers for the city, to be approved by the people's assembly which was to meet again in one week. Thus a government was soon set up. The council passed ordinances, appointed a city marshal and levied occupation taxes for the government expenses. Surveys had by this time been made, and one of the first tasks of the city government was to clear the streets where many squatter's tents still remained. There were hard feelings, and threats of violence by those whom the street surveys would dispossess. Mayor D. B. Dyer and his council debated anxiously.

Bill, helping Fred Sutton haul some of his belongings, was hailed by a man who threaded his way through the tangle of tents and traffic.

"The mayor wants to see you, he and the council."

This was Bill's first meeting with the mayor, but several Kansas men were there. Mayor Dyer explained their problem. "Three men spoke up here and said, 'Bill Tilghman can do it,' so we sent for you." Plans were agreed on.

The mayor issued a proclamation that Oklahoma avenue would be cleared on a certain day, and other streets in order. Bill was ready. He had brought in two big logs, whose combined length reached across the street. They were fastened together with chains, and a team of mules hitched at each end. Bill himself, on a horse, and with his winchester and six-shooters, rode ahead, and on the other side of the street rode Jim Masterson, brother of Bat, who was similarly armed. A crowd quickly gathered, and Bill made a speech.

"You all know the mayor's proclamation that the streets must be opened. The survey has been properly and fairly made, and I am under his orders to clear the streets. I am sending men ahead to warn people to move before we come along with the mules and drag. I hope everybody will move quietly, and not have to be run over or thrown out.

"Of course," records Frank Greer, "there were great mutterings. Many men stood with their guns and revolvers in hand, saying that they had the same right to their lots in the street as others."

But Bill, with mules and drag following, rode slowly forward. Down along the street began a scramble of moving.

"In an hour, there was not a tent or piece of luggage on Oklahoma avenue, and for the first time since the occupation of Guthrie, you could stand on the hill and look straight down to the Santa Fe station."

Oklahoma City had likewise set up a government, and in both cities these functioned for a year, until congress provided for a territorial government and local divisions. In spite of bitter brawling over lot claims, and the general wildness of a new town, Oklahoma City had no killing and Guthrie but one. The people who founded the new commonwealth were bent on building homes and making business success. The tough element was in the minority, and kept within bounds.

Bill built a comfortable cottage and brought his family from Dodge City. William, Jr., was now about three years old, and a little girl, Vonia, was born at Dodge City in november, 1889.

But he could not long be separated from horses. He leased a quarter section of school land[25] adjoining the city of Guthrie, and there kept his horses and a few cattle, broke out some land, and planted an orchard. He was a prime mover in establishing a race track and fair at Guthrie, as he had been at Dodge City.

Guthrie was the territorial capital and the supply and marketing point for a distance of fifty to seventy miles. It was the site of the government land office, another one being at Kingfisher. To one of these land offices, every homesteader in the territory must come for filing and proving-up his claim.

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[25] Land set apart by the government as endowment for public schools.

The several Indian reservations and the Cherokee strip were opened and added to the original "Old Oklahoma" until the "twin territories," Oklahoma and the remaining Indian Territory, composed of the "Nations," or five civilized tribes, divided almost equally the land that had been "Indian Territory" before 1889. The two were again united in the state of Oklahoma.

The second "opening" came in september, 1891, the lands of the Iowa, Sac and Fox and Pottawatomie, lying east of "Old Oklahoma." Bill made this "run" from the Kickapoo country, where the Deep Fork river was the boundary. It was a stream of steep and brushy banks, and Bill and Neal Brown therefore cleared a space and dug the bank sloping so their horses could go down. Noon was near, and Bill hurried to put away the spade in their spring wagon. When he returned, a stranger was before him.

"Here," he said. "That's my place that I just dug out."

"I don't know whether it is or not," returned the stranger, pushing his horse squarely into the narrow pass. Men looking at their watches were thrusting them back into pockets. The final instant was at hand.

Bill's fist shot out, and the intruder fell sprawling from his horse, into the water. The signal guns cracked, and Bill's horse plunged down the opened pathway.

Henry Garris, his old buffalo partner, had no horse, but seizing the tail of Bill's mount, was pulled across the river, where he stopped and staked a fine claim. Bill rode further, and took his claim on Bell Cow creek, two and a half miles northwest of the present city of Chandler. This townsite was opened three days after the land opening.

Soldiers and sailors had "preference right," which enabled them to file on a claim without making a run. Bill found a very good farm southeast of town for his father, so William and Amanda again followed their son. William was unable to do the heavier work, but his small pension enabled him to hire this, while his own labor on fences, garden and orchard, and caring for his stock, in a few years developed the bare land into a good farm.

Bill had sufficient timber on his claim to build a double log house, two story and six rooms, more commodious than the usual settler's home. Most of them had a dugout or a one-room shack. He set out an orchard. The rich new land proved particularly suited to peaches, and in a few years Oklahoma trees were bearing by wagon-loads, but with no market. Because of Texas fever, Bill gave up his pedigreed cattle, but kept a number of milch cows of hardy stock. Of course he kept his horses; and he began to raise game chickens, which became his favorite hobby. He was one of the first to plant alfalfa. He sent to Iowa for seed corn, and grew crops so superior that his neighbors begged for seed. Likewise, his purebred hogs furnished an example, and helped many to start with improved stock.

While he was often absent on official work, he had a capable hired man with him for some years, who, with Flora, looked after the farm and stock. Charles, now past twenty-one, had completed a course in business college and was working for the express company at Guthrie. Dottie was there most of the time to attend school, Bill paying her board in the home of a friend.

Neal Brown, after disposing of the ranch and stock in Kansas, continued with Bill. He too secured a claim near Chandler. At Guthrie, their horse partnership continued and Brown served for some time as deputy marshal. They took a small racing string to St. Louis in 1892 and 1893. Heck, the star of their stable, was unbeatable up to 4½ furlongs, having a strain of quarter-horse blood. One of their horses was killed on the track. A third, though fast, was made ill by shipping, and took so long to get into condition that she was a losing investment. Heck's winnings and a purse or two from Hattie B. were not enough to make the stable a paying one.

But at St. Louis, Bill met racing men from Kentucky and the east. He saw horses that reminded him of his beloved Chief, and he began a study of thoroughbreds. About two years later he went to Kentucky and bought two stallions, Chant, winner of the Kentucky Derby in 1894, and Ceverton, representing some of the late English importations and the best American blood lines. With the thoroughbred mares he already owned, he set up a modest breeding establishment at his Lincoln county home, naming it Oakland Stock farm (*see plate* 8). Racing required all a man's time; and he would not give up his life work as an officer for that.

Deputy United States Marshal

Deputy sheriff, under-sheriff, city marshal, Bill had served. Now a wider field called him. The new territory was hardly a year old, when U.S. Marshal William Grimes chose him as deputy. In the Indian troubles he had served briefly as scout for the army. Now he began a service for the U.S. Government, that lasted twenty-one years. Most of the administrations in that time were Republican, and Bill was an active Democrat. Nevertheless, his commission was renewed with each administration.

The Oklahoma, or Western Federal district comprised the organized territory, and the adjacent Indian reservations, while the Eastern district covered the area of the five civilized tribes. Bill held a courtesy commission in the Eastern district, which was conceded to only one or two men on each staff. It enabled them to follow criminals into the other district and made a closer cooperation between the two marshal's offices. Bill's work therefore ranged over the entire area of what is now the state of Oklahoma, from the Arkansas to New Mexico, and from Kansas to Red river. Then, too, there were special trips afar, to Columbus, Ohio, and other places where federal prisoners were kept, and frequently to Washington.

There was work for the marshals. The settlers struggling to build homes were for the most part law abiding. But thousands of cattle and horses, property of the Indians, or cattle-men who leased the range, roamed in the reservations and the vast area of the Cherokee strip. And in the untracked prairies, the woods and canyons, were hiding places a-plenty for men and stock. It was easy to round up a bunch and be off before they would be missed. From Texas, northwest across the territory, ran the Horsethief trail, not a marked and trodden route, but a devious, changing way to western Kansas and Colorado. Scattered ranches afforded stopping places and hideouts for the men who traveled back and forth, selling their Texas booty in the north, and stealing there a fresh bunch to sell in Texas. Some of the ranchers were themselves hard men, who by lease or Indian marriage had obtained right to stay here; or they had taken claims in some of the land openings. Sometimes they were legitimate cattle-men who found it convenient to ask no questions of the men who stopped for a night's lodging or a stay of several days. The hospitality of the range was open for all comers. The men of the hidden trail never appeared at the ranch house with more than their saddle horses. And stock wearing the brand of that ranch were never missing.

The illicit trade in liquor for the Indians was a hydra that constantly grew new heads. Selling, transporting, or possessing liquor in the Indian reservations was a criminal offense. But in the organized part of the territory, legal saloons flourished. Violations of postal laws, train and bank robberies, also helped to keep the twelve deputies and a number of possemen busy.

Oklahoma had as yet few banks or other places with large amounts of money. But the through mail and express cars often carried valuable booty. Moreover, the territories offered wilds to baffle pursuit; and they were in striking distance of towns in four states, with their banks, express offices, railroad trains, and larger business concerns.

With these advantages, the reign of outlawry grew up in Oklahoma, and the names of bandits filled the news dispatches and won their sorry fame over the United States; the Daltons, Doolin, Cook, Jennings, Starr, and others. They looked down on the small fry, whiskey peddlers or horse-thieves.

These lesser men usually indulged in petty crime; the theft of a sack of corn, or the killing of a neighbor's hog in the timber. The men of the outlaw gangs were of different stamp and training. Many were cowboys, men who could ride and shoot, who knew every mile of the country, could find remote cabins, or a cave in the Gloss mountains; and with the wild freedom of the range in their blood. They worked and earned their living. Then, suddenly, the lands were opened, the cattle were gone, and their occupation with them. Some turned settler. But—"Gosh! this looking up and down a corn row!" as one of them feelingly expressed it, was too hard for most. Some went on to the remaining ranges in the West. And some turned outlaw.

Early in 1891, Grat Dalton, convicted of train robbery and murder in California, and his brother Emmett, also charged in the same affair, escaped and came back to begin their bandit career in Oklahoma. Their brother Bob became their leader, and they were joined by several other equally hard men. In june, they robbed the Santa Fe train at Redrock. Soon after, one of them, Charley Bryant, killed and was killed by Deputy Ed Short who had captured him. Next year, almost to the day, the Daltons again robbed the Santa

Fe, holding up both north and south-bound passenger trains at the passing switch south of Redrock, june 1, 1892. In july they robbed the MKT train near Adair, in the eastern part of the Indian Territory.

Bill was not assigned on these cases, the outlaws keeping most of the time out of the Western district. He still lived on his claim near Chandler, and was given general supervision in that part. Only a few miles east was the line of the Creek Indian country, a haven for thieves and criminals, the goal of whiskey peddlers, and a starting point for raids to pick up a horse or cow from the settlers' small possessions. He was sent farther on various mail and post office cases.

In the marshal's office, Bill found new associates and a group of lifelong friends. Besides the successive marshals, there were John Hale, chief deputy; Horace Speed, district attorney; the various judges and other attorneys; and a tall young fellow, assistant district attorney, who was to be a soldier in the Spanish-American war, a judge, and a general in France in the first World War, Roy Hoffman. Of the other deputies, there was Chris Madsen, a fair-haired, keen little man, inclined to roundness, but with more adventures and history than inches to his height (*see plate* 6). Son of a Danish army officer, he had received a good education. At fourteen he served in the army of Denmark when Prussia seized Schleswig-Holstein in the war of 1864. His father and brother were killed. Young Christian then went through the Danish Military school, joined the French Foreign legion, saw service in Algiers, and fought his German enemies a second time in the Franco-Prussian War.

Then he came to the United States, and soon turned to the army, where for fifteen years he was in the frontier posts. He was quartermaster-sergeant of the Fifth cavalry; had charge of the Indian scouts in Wyoming and later in the Indian Territory; and took part in some of the hardest fighting and marches of the Indian warfare that followed the Custer massacre.

Out of the army with an honorable record, he went almost at once into the marshal work, serving for some time in Missouri, then returning to Guthrie. Here he followed John Hale as chief deputy, and at one time acting marshal. He enlisted in the Rough Riders in 1898, and Theodore Roosevelt has paid high tribute to his work as quartermaster where he did inestimable service in getting that wholly inexperienced outfit organized and equipped.

Third of the Three Guardsmen, as they came to be called, was Heck Thomas (*see plate* 5), six feet two, strikingly handsome, dark of hair and eyes, and with the courtly manners and soft drawl of the Old South; but a man of nerve and iron underneath. At twelve years old, with teeth set, he had picked his way across battlefields strewn with dead, a messenger boy with the Stonewall Jackson brigade of the Confederate army.

After the war, as an express messenger in Texas, his pluck and wit saved a package containing twenty thousand dollars when the Sam Bass gang held up the train. Some time later, single-handed he captured the two Lee brothers, who had killed four men at one place in the Indian Territory, and who carried their guns with them into the hay field where Thomas found them. Thomas had worked for some time out of the famous U.S. court at Fort Smith; Judge Parker's court, as it was known, named for the "hanging judge." In his years upon this bench, he pronounced death upon one hundred and sixty-eight men, and of these eighty-eight were hanged. This, it should be noted, shows the hardness of the cases brought here, rather than the harshness of the judge.

Thomas, like Bill, was a peace officer by profession. Long rides on dangerous trails, hardships shared, and congenial temperaments, made theirs a fast friendship. They had one more taste in common, the hobby of game chickens, to which both were devoted.

Perry — A Wild Town

All of the western country was a-thrill in the spring of 1893. Newspapers in every state carried the story. Things were moving at Washington. The Cherokee strip was to be opened. Its rich grass lands stretched for sixty miles south from the Kansas line, the coveted goal of thousands. The largest single land opening was scheduled; a run; the date, september 16.

Four land offices were established, and town sites set apart with them. Here would be the boom towns, Enid, Alva, Woodward and Perry. John Hale, chief deputy, drew a paper from his desk.

"Bill," he said, "You're to be in charge of the Perry land office and town site. You go in the evening before."

Open prairie, rolling hills, sparse timber along Cow creek, the steel rails of the Santa Fe glimmering away into the distance, the little new wooden buildings of the land office and post-office in Government square, with the bright flag flying above them. That was Perry, as the sun reached the zenith. Eight miles south, along the line, were drawn the waiting thousands, on horseback, in every kind of conveyance. Engine with cowcatcher set meticulously on "the line," white steam hissing softly from its cylinders, the coaches loaded, platforms and roof, with packed humanity; the first train waited, with others drawn up behind it.

The story of the Run has been often told. By one o'clock the foremost were on the Perry townsite, and by nightfall ten thousand people were camped on the prairie. Holding lots, jumping lots, getting water–it had been a long dry season–putting up tents and shacks; all the feverish activity of a boom town, sprung into being within twenty-four hours.

There were quarrels, fights, but with the amazing ingenuity of the American pioneers, everybody somehow got along. Bill moved among them, settling with a word some disturbance. By morning the line was formed before the land office, and his first duty was there. A heavy-shouldered, red-faced man shoved in. The little man he displaced drew off with a muttered curse. Bill moved quickly.

"Here you," he said. "Take your place at the end of the line, same as every one else. I saw you shove that man out."

"He was out. I had a right to step in," growled the interloper. Bill's hand shot out, jerking him from the line, and with a quick shift seizing his wrist, drew his arm up behind his back in a lock that rendered him helpless. He marched him back along the line.

"Now stay where you belong," he admonished.

A murmur of approbation rose as Bill walked off. They were for fair play. Every one must take his turn, even though it meant a weary vigil. A voice lifted proudly.

"That's Bill Tilghman. He used to be marshal at Dodge City in the cattle days. No monkey business with him!"

The land office closed at night, but the town didn't. Angry voices came from a tent. As Bill approached, a young fellow, a cowboy in his town costume, backed out, protesting. A hand with a gun followed.

"What's going on here?" asked Bill. He jerked the tent flap open, standing well to one side. His gun pointed at the man within. "So it's you, Tenspot!" The man lowered his gun sulkily. "We don't want any of your slicker games here," went on Bill. "How much did he get from you, Kid?"

The young fellow pressed forward. "Sixty dollars," he said. "I've not got a cent to eat on!"

Bill held out his hand. "He gambled it!" growled Tenspot.

"You don't want to take advantage of a greenhorn, do you? By the way, they've got a warrant out at San Antonio. I might wire them tonight."

It was a guess, a bluff, but it worked. Bill hadn't said the warrant was for him.

"Now, Mr. Tilghman, you wouldn't do that? It was all fair business. And of course I don't want to take advantage of a kid." He held out a roll of bills. The marshal counted off sixty dollars. "See you don't get into any more trouble, Tenspot," he said; and to the victim, "Here's your money. And you've had too much whiskey. You'd better quit hitting the high spots, and make a man of yourself."

Sometimes, advice is taken. In after years, a man of honor and position looked back gratefully to that moment, as the valley of decision. Always above his desk hung a photograph of Bill Tilghman; and the warm devotion which he displayed toward him was not to be measured by the small service of the money, but from a deep consciousness of the dark and futile ways from which Bill, as he felt, had saved him.

The marshal's office sent up Charles Colcord as Bill's assistant, and another, "Fatty" Hopkins, whose two hundred and fifty pounds was bone and muscle rather than fat.

A snapping-black-eyed young woman dashed up to Bill.

"I'm Mrs. Carl Brown–Neal Brown's my uncle–and there's a man jumping my lot!"

Bill was due at the land office. "You go and see about it, Fatty," he said. The deputy marshal in his shirt sleeves, and with two forty-fives in his belt, brought no dismay to the man who was unloading lumber on the disputed lot. Neither did he care that he displaced a lady.

"I guess you don't know who I am," he told the officer. "I'm Mr. McElheny of the Rock Island railroad."

Hopkins looked at the crowd which had gathered to watch eagerly the spirited young woman and the massive marshal. In addition to his bulk, Fatty had also a sense of the dramatic. He spoke.

"I will now show you, gentlemen, a man named McElheney of the Rock Island railroad, getting h . . kicked out of him."

Seizing the lot jumper by the collar, he expertly booted him into the street. The crowd yelled appreciatively. It was a good show. Neither railroads nor lot jumpers were popular in those days.

Bill had a large patch of watermelons on his leased school land at Guthrie that summer, and now they were ripe. He wired to his hired man to ship them. Drinking water, water of any kind, was scarce at Perry; fruits and vegetables unknown. The word "watermelons" brought a stampede to the railroad siding, where Bill and a helper worked furiously passing out melons from the car door. Men pressed forward, reached eager hands to seize them. Those farther back waved their money, twenty-five or fifty cents, above their heads and shouted, "Me next!" "Give me that one." The melons had never seen ice. But nobody cared for that. When the last one was gone, the two men dropped in the doorway, their clothes soaked with sweat, and almost too tired to move.

"It was about equal to a footrace with a buffalo," said Bill. But he had eight hundred dollars tied up in a handkerchief. He sent it to the bank at Guthrie that night, by John Hale.

Business houses as well as homes were quickly set up in tents, and then in wooden buildings. "Hell's Half Acre" comprised gambling houses, dance halls, and a good portion of Perry's seventy saloons. They had plenty of business. As Bill put it: "Those who had got lots or claims felt like celebrating, and those that didn't wanted to be cheered up."

Residents of the district, sleeping on the ground in their tents, found it desirable to set up bullet shields. A bale of hay was the favorite protection. One man was killed, supposedly by a thief trying to get his saddle. Bill had no authority to disperse or regulate these activities, only to keep the peace. He moved quietly through the milling crowds. Fred Sutton who had made the run and filed on the claim that was now West Perry, walked with him one afternoon.

"Hello, Sam," said Bill. "When did you leave the Horse-shoe outfit? And when are you going back?"

"I left this morning, and I'll go back when I get ready," was the truculent answer. A crescent-shaped scar in the man's forehead gave him a savage look, and his nickname of "Crescent Sam."

"Better get ready by dark. We don't need your kind around here." . . "He's a thief and a killer," Bill explained to Sutton as they moved on.

Sutton joined him again after supper. Hell's Half Acre was alive with lights and music and drunken voices. Here was *The Buckhorn,* biggest saloon and gambling house, set up in a large tent. Six large kerosene lamps hung from the ridge pole filling it with light. Into this glow stepped Crescent Sam, lifting his voice in the ancient war cry: "I'm a she-wolf from Bitter Creek, and it's my night to howl-l-l!"

"I'm waiting for anybody that wants to send me home," he challenged, and punctuated it with two shots at the moon. Just then he saw Bill, some fifty feet away, before another light. Crescent Sam's left hand darted toward his other six-shooter, and his right trigger-finger jerked, the gun already in his hand. Two shots and flashes came so closely that none could tell which was which. But the wolf from the Horse-shoe slowly crumpled to the earth. Bill lifted his gun and blew the smoke from the barrel.

"Poor devil," he said. "Help me drag him in the tent." They laid Sam along the tent wall, and Bill straightened his body and crossed his hands. The music and dancing went on. It had never stopped at the shooting.

Heck Thomas also came to serve as Bill's assistant. Before winter the town was built up with wooden houses, spreading over both the government townsite and West Perry. A city government was organized, and the council at once asked that Bill be made city marshal (*see plate* 5). The U.S. marshal's office gave him a leave, but continued his commission so that he could attend to any government work in that locality.

Perry citizens presented him with a handsome badge, a star within a crescent of gold, with blue enamel lettering, "Chief of Police."

Thieves and Tricksters

In the next year, Bill returned to his Chandler farm and resumed active work for the marshal's office. Of this period, John Hale, chief deputy, and later a prominent banker, wrote me shortly after Bill's death:

> It was always understood that when an exceptionally dangerous piece of work was to be done, such work was invariably assigned to Tilghman. And if he were out of the office on a field trip, the assignment sometimes would be held for two weeks or so, until he should come in.

City marshal business was mostly matters of the moment, seen and heard. Now Bill was to win reputation as a detective. With his early instruction from Prosecutor Mike Sutton, from his own attendance at courts, Bill knew the requirements of evidence. It pleased him to piece items together, to pit his knowledge and judgment against the mind of the criminal, to find the obscure point that would show the way to track down the offender, or to fill out the proof for court.

Into the marshal's office one day came Mr. Bebee, post-office inspector. Mail routes centering at El Reno, and serving the country for a hundred and sixty miles westward, with one hundred inland post offices, were involved. Complaints had been made from Cloud Chief, Seger, Calumet and Arapaho. Living so far from the railroads and large towns, inhabitants of this region purchased many articles from the mail order houses. But goods were missing.

The latest outrage – it was nothing less – was the loss of a wedding dress. A week's journey, three days' drive each way, and a day shopping and having the dress planned with the best dressmaker in El Reno, it had taken the young lady and her mother for this important matter. A blue cashmere, trimmed with lace. The dressmaker promised to have it delivered in good time.

Consternation reigned when, in the midst of cooking and preparing for the wedding, her father rode home from the post office empty handed. There were no telephones. Guests began to arrive; those who lived farthest must stay all night. Next day her brother waited for the mail, but he too, rode back empty handed, and the bride was married in her old "best dress."

Indignant letters to the dressmaker brought information that she had mailed the package to arrive three days before the wedding date. They appealed to the post-office department.

"So far, I've not any clue," said the inspector. "A few packages are just lost, like this wedding dress. Mostly, they come through with no signs of tampering, but the articles are not inside."

Bill took the list of missing articles. He spent the day and long into the night studying these, and the mail routes.

"It looks like inside work to me," he told the inspector. "Now if we send some packages ourselves, we can check those that go through, and where they disappear if they don't arrive."

It took six weeks work and watching. But on the 5th of january, 1895, remembered as one of the coldest days known since the settlement of the country, Bill drove forty miles, to the home of one of the mail carriers. A family group, consisting of J. M. Robertson, his son and son-in-law, were sub-contractors for carrying the mails on the Calumet, Taylor, Cloud Chief and Arapaho routes.

Bill found no one at home at the relay station near Bridgeport except Mrs. Robertson, an innocent appearing country woman. But Bill had learned that these can sometimes be dangerous. It was near noon, and he asked for dinner and feed for his mules, pretending to be a cattle buyer. Hesitant at first, the woman was drawn by the offer of pay, and set about cooking dinner. Bill, sitting near the fire, watched her covertly. She glanced out of the window often, and at last flung a shawl about her and went out with the water bucket. Springing to the window, Bill saw her meet her husband who had just driven in with the mail hack. She was warning him that some one was in the house. But also, she was out of the way for several minutes. Bill pulled aside the curtain that hung before an improvised clothes closet. There was a new woman's coat which tallied with one on his list. A bureau drawer – yes, here were some new things, gloves, dress goods. Up on the shelf among the common, heavy cups and dishes, stood a bright-flowered sugar and cream set; somebody's Christmas present that didn't arrive.

The door flew open suddenly. The man stood there, with truculent suspicion written on his face; the woman just behind him. But they were cautious. If this man were not an officer, they must not give themselves away. Their doubts were answered. For Bill faced them, his gun ready.

"Put up your hands. You're under arrest for robbing the mails."

The man submitted quietly, and Bill took a gun from him. They ate dinner, and Robertson begged to take care of his stock before they left. Bill agreed. But as they got up, he saw the woman, with her back turned, slipping something under her apron.

"Hand that over!" he commanded. Sullenly, she gave him a revolver. Since he could not trust her, Bill took them both before him, with his gun ready, while the man put down feed for his cow and horses. He put the man, handcuffed, in the back seat of his spring wagon, and kept the woman in front with him, watching her warily on the long drive to town. In three days more he finished the case, arresting ten persons in all. At the Bridgeport place was a wagon-load of plunder, including one sewing machine. He found another large haul at the home of the son-in-law, Essex. The elder Robertson was silent, but the others talked. They had begun almost by accident, with a pair of men's gloves, on which the wrapping was broken. They were fearful about that, but as they heard nothing from it, they began to take other things. For the most part, they opened the packages and rewrapped them so carefully that they did not appear to have been tampered with.

"They could hardly wait for the mail to come. It was just like Christmas for them every day," said Bill.

More detective work was required on a trail that, with dim clues, led to Fort Madison, Iowa, and the arrest of one William Cumberledge. Bill arrested him for a post-office robbery.

Life was not all hard criminals and desperate cases. Bill rode one summer night, coming at daybreak to a cabin, to find the man he sought sleeping on a quilt before the door. Very nonchalant when Bill prodded him, he opened his eyes, and recognizing the officer, drawled: "What is it this time, Bill? Territory or federal?"

George Maydele and Eugene Kile, proprietors of a saloon at Perkins, forty miles northeast of Guthrie, had neglected to pay their whiskey license. So late one afternoon Bill arrived with a warrant for them. The two accepted arrest politely, and as the local jail had anything but good accommodations, Bill released them on their own recognizance for the night. They would start for Guthrie in the morning. After breakfast he went to the saloon, where he found Mr. Kile giving instructions to his bartender, until he should return.

"Good morning, Mr. Tilghman," he said. "You about ready to start? I guess George will be here pretty soon."

"I dunno about that," spoke up an early customer. "Town marshal done arrested him, and they've got him down in the justice of the peace court right now."

Bill swung around. "What for?"

"Something about not payin' his saloon license, they said."

In a flash Bill saw the trick. It was plainly a bald attempt to cheat the law. The local court had no jurisdiction in a federal case. But by pleading guilty and taking a light fine, the culprit would seek to escape the federal court on the grounds of double jeopardy – the constitutional provision that a man may not be tried twice for the same offense.

"Where is it?" Bill asked.

Justice Utter sat solemnly at his battered table, while the town marshal, A. N. Woldridge, stood before him with the prisoner.

An electric tension charged the room as the door flung back and Bill entered.

"What are you doing with this man?" he said "He is my prisoner, in federal custody."

The judge squirmed, but lawyer Tillery spoke up.

"He's been duly arrested, and is being tried before this court."

"You can't arrest a federal prisoner," retorted Bill. "Come on, Maydele!"

"You're disturbing this court in session," cried town marshal A. N. Woldridge. The judge rapped for order. Lawyer Tillery began to expound law, and the judge added his word. Bill's patience was exhausted.

"There's one other law you'd better look up," he said. "On conspiracy to evade the law."

His silver-and-pearl forty-five flashed out, as he stepped toward the prisoner. The town marshal sprang between them but fell back with a squawk as the black mouth of the six-gun swung to his middle. Bill seized Maydele by the arm. The editor of the Perkins paper, with "the facts carefully gathered," may tell the story.

> Marshal Tilghman, pointing his weapon at Woldridge, left the room with his man, and marched him up town. This action so rattled the court that great disorder prevailed, and it is said J. Tillery ran from the room following Tilghman, shrieking "Gimme a gun! some one gimme a gun!"

The court gathered itself together, however, and: "A warrant was issued for Marshal Tilghman's arrest charging him with assault upon the person of A. N. Woldridge with intent to kill." But the town marshal was collapsed, and "Deputy constable Graham pursued Tilghman and read him the warrant."

With a sharp admonition to Maydele to be ready to go, Bill returned with the constable to the court, where he was formally charged, and the judge asked for his plea of guilty or not guilty.

"That's a serious charge, your honor," said Bill gravely. "I must ask for a continuance."

He had them there, and after some wrangling, the case was set for the next monday, and his bond fixed at two hundred dollars. If they expected to hold him on this, they were disappointed, for Dr. Thomas, Eugene Kile – Maydele's "partner in crime" – and Kile's father promptly made it.

"During all this proceeding, Tilghman proved as cool as a cucumber, like a determined man who believed he was right," records the Perkins editor.

At noon, Bill left with his two prisoners, to meet the hilarious jests of the marshal's force at being arrested by a small town deputy constable; while no doubt town marshal Woldridge came in for a full share of guying for the not very successful role which he had played.

The U.S. district attorney sent an assistant to Perkins at the time for the hearing, and the case against Bill was promptly dismissed.

While for quick trips the marshals rode horseback and used the railroads where possible, much of their work was done driving. A spring wagon, with camp outfit, guns and provisions, was more useful in the journeys through the wild, sparsely settled country. It was also better means of bringing in prisoners.

Often two or three would go, and they would have a saddle horse or two for scouting, or for riding if they returned with the wagon full of prisoners. Game was plentiful, and Bill was often able to catch fish for breakfast.

When traveling alone, or through more settled country, Bill stopped at farm houses, where they were hospitably glad to receive a visitor, though he paid for such accommodations. He won warm friendships here. The families welcomed him eagerly whenever he would return. And through such local acquaintance he could often gather information if any official work arose.

The Doolin Gang

The Daltons, from the time Grat and Emmett returned from California and began their gang career, lasted only fifteen months. The Doolin gang, which followed, carried on for four years. Bill Doolin, it is said, was kept from the flaming guns of Coffeyville by the lameness of his horse. Emmett Dalton, in his memoirs, says they had found the gang too numerous, profits too small when divided among so many, and had told Doolin, Red Buck and others to shift for themselves.

At any rate, Doolin became leader of a new outlaw gang, and made a record for the longest outlaw career, eight years from the time he joined the "wild bunch."

O. D. Halsell, Texas cattle-man, in 1880 established his HX Bar ranch on the Cimarron, thirteen miles northeast of the future site of Guthrie. To build corrals and get out logs for cabins, he hired a youth from Arkansas, Bill Doolin, a lanky illiterate fellow; but he could use an axe, which Halsell's cowboys couldn't. In a few years, the backwoods boy had learned to ride and rope and shoot, was a top-hand cow-puncher. And he could read a newspaper and write a letter. Mr. Halsell entrusted him with much of his ranch business at Caldwell, Kansas, their nearest town.

Doolin was slender, six feet-two, with fair hair and blue eyes, and a winning personality. With all this, there was a streak of wildness in him. He never made any pretense of wrongs to avenge, or persecution that "drove him to a life of crime," the favorite outlaw sob-story. He knew work, hard, heavy work with his hands, and in the saddle. When the change came, he made his choice.

The gang of which he was leader included Bill Dalton, a brother who had not been with the others in their outlaw career; "Little Bill" Raidler, who stood next to the leader, a man of good education, from Pennsylvania; George Weightman, known as Red Buck; George Newcomb, "Bitter Creek," handsome as a movie star; Charles Pierce; and Dick West, "Little Dick" who, as the last survivor, joined the later Jennings gang. Red Buck was known as a killer. He had served a term in prison for horse stealing. Within thirty days after his release, he had stolen seven good horses, and thus equipped, joined Doolin. Other members were Tulsa Jack, Dynamite Dick and Arkansas Tom.

The gang knew every mile of the two territories, and they had convenient hold-outs; a cave, a place known as the Rock Fort, of stone walls and dugout. It belonged to a member of the Dunn family, five brothers and cousins whose homes were stopping places for the gang. At one of these, with much unsettled land about it, they often stayed and here Bill saw a large post-oak tree riddled with bullets. They had used it as a target, shooting from a galloping horse. They trained themselves also in "dodging a bullet," a quick duck sideways and down, at the same time shooting at the pretended adversary.

The small town of Ingalls, ten miles east of Stillwater, was known as their holdout. Here they came openly. There was always some one to give warning if a marshal were approaching. Only a few miles distant were wild and unsettled parts of the Pawnee country, hills and timber along the Cimarron, where escape was easy.

Doolin had been with the Daltons in the first train robbery at Redrock, in june, 1891, and presumably in various other crimes. In november, 1892, a few weeks after the others were killed at Coffeyville, he, with Bitter Creek and Ol Yountis, robbed the bank at Spearville, Kansas, west of Dodge City. Bill's old friend, Chalk Beeson was sheriff of Ford county, and followed them. Chris Madsen was at Fort Supply, and warned by telegraph, almost caught them with a squad of soldiers as they fled through western Oklahoma. In a running fight, Doolin was wounded in the foot. Madsen and Beeson traced Yountis to his sister's home at Orlando, near Guthrie. He chose to shoot it out with them and was killed. Doolin and Bitter Creek had disappeared.

But in all these affairs, no definite identification of Doolin had been made, and no warrant specifically issued against him. So it chanced that in the next summer when Bill dropped in one day to see his friend Fred Sutton at the Turf Exchange in Guthrie, Doolin and Bitter Creek came in. They were known in Guthrie as cowboys, and Bill had met Doolin with his former employer, Oscar Halsell.

"Mr. Tilghman," said Doolin, "We're in kind of hard luck. Couldn't you set us up?"

"Why sure!" returned Bill; and to the bartender–"Give them what they want."

The drinks were quickly set out, and Bill started to pay, when Doolin said: "Wait. We can pay for ourselves. I was just fooling."

He drew from his pocket a roll of bills, and paid grandly. The two then proceeded to the gambling tables and more drinks.

On the street, Bill met Mr. Halsell, who at the opening had established a wholesale grocery business in Guthrie.

"I just saw your old cowboy, Doolin. What's he doing now?"

"Why, not anything that I know of," returned Mr. Halsell. "He made a trip to New Mexico a while back, looking for cattle work, he said."

Many months later, Bill learned that Doolin, Bill Dalton, Bitter Creek and Tulsa Jack had robbed a train at Cimarron, Kansas, on may 28. The roll which Doolin flashed was part of the proceeds of that robbery.

But there were John Doe warrants, and some personal, for the members of the gang. And on september 1, 1893 a posse of deputy marshals drove into the town of Ingalls, hidden in the back of a covered wagon. A pitched battle ensued, in which marshals Houston, Speed and Shadley were killed, Bitter Creek badly wounded, but carried off by his companions, and Arkansas Tom, ill, and trapped in the upper story of the little hotel, was captured.

Bill was laid up at this time from an accident, he and his horse having plunged off a broken bridge into a swollen creek, one night in the rain. Bill went on crutches for several weeks.

Now, with Chris Madsen and Heck Thomas, he was assigned the duty of running down the Doolin gang. A special expense fund was allotted. Madsen had already sent his brother-in-law, Morris, whom none of them knew, to spend some weeks in the region around Ingalls and Jennings to gather information of the outlaws, their friends and stopping places. Now, Morris, with two other deputies, was given a cow-man's cook-wagon, loaded with supplies, and went back into the outlaw country. Madsen and Thomas left Guthrie singly, to meet at Bill's farm near Chandler. Thence they all went secretly to the camp established by Morris.

Their plan was to attack a dugout on Dunn's place. It opened into a ravine, and the marshals, slipping up in the night, took positions where they could shoot down any man coming out. At daybreak, Heck Thomas, at the rear, called on them to surrender, and when they refused, threw two sticks of dynamite on the roof. Eight men came out with hands in air, but to the chagrin of the marshals, not one of the important men they were after. All were wanted for something, however. So they were handcuffed and left under guard, while Madsen, Bill, and Thomas set out on the trail of Doolin and four others.

The carefully laid plan to take them by surprise had failed, for a man, riding hard from Guthrie, had brought warning, and the outlaws fled only a few hours before Madsen's posse arrived. Following closely they stopped at a lonely Indian cabin. The owner seemed to be expecting them.

"The others said you would be along," he said. "We got dinner ready."

The outlaws had eaten breakfast with him and told him that the others "of their party" would be along for dinner, and would pay for all. So, with a rueful laugh at their own discomfiture, the marshals called off the chase. The outlaws knew they were being followed, and certainly could elude the pursuit. The puzzled Indian could hardly understand what it was all about.

This specimen of the white man's humor was beyond him. But Madsen paid him for the outlaws' breakfast, as well as their own dinner.

"I might come that way again, some time," he said, "and I wanted to leave the Indian satisfied."

Two years later, when Doolin was captured, this incident was recalled. "He confessed that it was a mean trick," and promised to repay Madsen some time "when he made a draw on a bank."

Courtship as well as crime had occupied Bill Doolin, and in the spring of 1894 he was married to the daughter of a country preacher in the Ingalls-Jennings region. That was a big year for the gang. In may they robbed the bank at Southwest City, Missouri, killing J. C. Seaborn, a former auditor of the state, and Doolin received a bullet which lodged above his left eye. A raid in Texas brought forty thousand dollars in unsigned bank notes which they folded in their saddle blankets to carry. There was considerable dismay in camp when they discovered that the notes were not "right." But they found a man who could forge the proper name upon them and so were able to pass them.

They staged an express robbery at Canadian, Texas, in which the sheriff was killed. Little Bill Raidler and Bitter Creek robbed the express office at Woodward, and with the proceeds went to the World's Fair at Chicago for a good time.

But the officers also had their innings. Bill Dalton was killed near Ardmore in june, 1894. Two girls known as Cattle Annie and Little Breeches, who ran with the gang, stole horses and carried messages for them, were captured by Bill and Deputy Steve Burke. They were sentenced to terms in the federal reformatory at Farmington, Massachusetts. In may, 1895, Tulsa

Jack led a train robbery at Dover and was killed next day by Chris Madsen's posse. And in july, Pierce and Bitter Creek met death.

On a bitter january day of 1895, snow on the ground, Bill, with Neal Brown, drove to the Rock Fort dugout. But he was not looking for the Doolin gang just then. They had not been heard of for some weeks, and in fact had been off in Texas. He wanted to see Bill Dunn. Leaving his rifle in the spring wagon, he went to the dugout, which was entered by a short flight of steps, with a sloping door over the top, now open, and an ordinary door below.

A gruff voice called, "Come in." Bill's eyes, dazzled by the snow, slowly adjusted to the gloom. On either side were double bunks, screened by quilts hung up as curtains. In the far end, beside a little fireplace, sat a bearded man, smoking, a rifle across his knees. Bill recognized him as a cousin of the man he sought. Moving to the fire, he greeted him, and the man responded surlily.

"No, Bill Dunn wasn't around." "A cold day." A grunt.

"I just happened to be passing this way and stopped to see if I could match my fighting dog with his," the marshal explained. "He told me a while back he thought he had one that could whip mine."

Dunn made no answer. His hands a little warmed, Bill turned about with his back to the fire. He could see now—death! The muzzles of half a dozen winchesters, trained on him, were sticking out from the curtained bunks.

Every nerve in his body tensed; but not by the flicker of an eyelash did he betray his knowledge. He waited.... An eternity of seconds. Then, in a casual voice, "I guess I better be going on." A pause. "How does a fellow get out of here?"

Dunn growled an answer: "The same damned way you got in."

"Well, tell him about the dog, then."

Slowly, easily, Bill forced himself to walk to the door, to lift the latch. It was open. He was through, closing it–not too quickly. Make it natural.

"I could feel the bullets in my back at every step," he confessed later. As the latch fell, he flashed into action; jerked his overcoat open, his revolver to his hand, even as he sprang up the steps. Whirling, he closed the sloping outer door; ran backward to the wagon, with his gun pointed, ready for the slightest lifting of that door. But it did not move. He sprang into the seat, seized his rifle and aimed it.

"Drive like the devil," he said to Brown. "The dugout is full of outlaws!"

Not till months later was the full story of his adventure told. Doolin, Red Buck, Dynamite Dick, Tulsa Jack, Pierce and Raidler, had just come back from Texas, glad to find shelter at the Rock Fort after their long ride in the storm. Every one of them knew Bill Tilghman. They recognized him when he drove up, and since they could not leave the dugout without meeting him face to face, they hurriedly hung up the quilts and hid. They trained their guns on him, waiting for some move. But they saw no sign of discovery, no sign of fear. They waited.

When Bill passed the door, Red Buck leaped out in a fury, to shoot him. Bill Doolin and Dunn seized and held him, with a lively tussle.

"Tilghman's too good a man to shoot in the back," said Doolin.

"We don't want any killing here," protested Dunn. "If you kill Bill Tilghman there'll be a hundred men here before morning, and they'd dynamite this place off the earth."

Bill by this time was safely away. Red Buck scored by reminding them that he would likely be back with a posse, and they'd better move. It was no pleasant prospect setting out in that weather for another long, cold ride. But they went.

Bill Takes the Trail

A few days later, Bill found Bill Dunn at his home place. Their talk was not, however, of fighting dogs.

"You've got a good farm and stock here, and a fine family growing up. It's time for you to make a choice. If you stick with the outlaws, you'll get the worst of it in the end. And how about your children?"

The other stirred uneasily. "I know. It's bad for them. It don't pay."

Bill rode back to Guthrie where he conferred with the marshal and the U.S. attorney. Those gentlemen were dismayed.

"First," said Bill, "I want that cattle stealing charge against the Dunns dismissed. I doubt if you can prove it anyhow. And I want deputy's commissions for Bill and Bee Dunn."

They protested, argued. Bill won his point. Thenceforward these men were on the side of the law, and the help they had given, failed the outlaws.

Now the gang scattered. Doolin was trying to pull out, for he was ill; and with a wife and baby, he wished to reform and settle down. His old employer, O. D. Halsell, met him secretly, and urged him to surrender. He might get off with a moderate sentence, serve it out in a few years and be safe.

"If you don't," said Halsell, "you'll go on till somebody kills you."

"I can shoot, too," returned Doolin. "I guess I can take care of myself."

"There's one man that can kill you, if you force him, and that's Bill Tilghman."

Doolin's face shadowed. "Yes," he said, uneasily. "Tilghman! He could."

But the outlaw shook his head at the suggestion of surrender. Too many murder charges; a man in Texas – Halsell hadn't heard of that – Seaborn at Southwest City, the sheriff at Canadian, an express messenger, the three marshals at Ingalls. There would be no light sentence for those.

Wild grapes were ripening in early september as Deputy Tilghman rode through the rugged hills of the eastern Osage country. On Mission creek at Moore's ranch Little Bill Raidler, next to Doolin in the gang, had taken refuge. By day the outlaw lay hidden in the timber, coming to the house at night to eat and sleep.

It was near sunset. Raidler came swinging along lightly through the corral, up the path by the well and the unchinked log henhouse. Mrs. Moore had just gone in the kitchen door with a bucket of water. A fragrant whiff of ham came forth.

Suddenly from the doorway of the log hut a man stepped out with shotgun aimed – Bill Tilghman. Raidler knew him in that half second when the command "Put up your hand," rang out. Instead, he dodged sideways – the "ducking the bullet" that all the gang had practiced so assiduously – whipped out his six-shooter and fired. His bullet went through the marshal's hat, knocking it off.

Bill's shotgun did not miss. But, with six bullets in his body, Raidler stood and fired until his gun was empty. Reeling with the last, he pitched forward on his face.

At Bill's command, Mrs. Moore brought water and clean rags and a pillow, and he bound up Raidler's wounds while the men hastily hitched up the farm wagon, throwing some hay and quilts in the back. They lifted the outlaw in.

Through the night, over the rough roads in the jolting wagon, thirty miles to the town of Elgin, Kansas. Bill sat beside his prisoner, bathed his face with water from a jug, held his head up on a pillow, to check the bleeding from a wound that bandages could not stanch. In town a doctor dressed the wounds and prepared some medicine. Bill secured a cot for the prisoner and rode with him in the baggage car, giving him the medicine every hour.

Raidler slowly recovered in the federal jail. He was tried at Kingfisher for train robbery, and sentenced for ten years. He developed locomotor ataxia as a result of his wounds, and after some years sought a pardon.

He wrote to Bill, asking his intercession. Bill read the letter with a curious smile. Then he went to his desk and searched a bit.

"I might just send him back this letter," he said, handing it to one of his fellow officers. It was one Raidler wrote to be smuggled out while he lay in jail. It was full of bitter abuse of the marshals.

But Bill's generosity and kindliness were too strong for resentment or reprisals. He re-read Raidler's letter, then sat down and wrote a recommendation for his parole. The outlaw returned to Oklahoma, rejoined his wife and made a living by keeping a tobacco store. He sent Bill a letter of thanks and a box of good cigars, and they had a friendly visit when Bill passed through his town.

The capture of Raidler made five of the gang killed or in prison. But Doolin, the leader had seemingly disappeared. Bill had found a trail and lost it. Then learned that a man of Doolin's description, in the summer, came to the little town of Burden, Kansas, to buy supplies. He drove a poor team and wagon, and seemed to be just a tenant farmer. Bill found the house a lonely place, with a ravine and trees, so that he could approach it unseen. At night, he could slip up to the window and see Doolin's wife putting her baby to bed. For six weeks he watched the place, waiting for the outlaw to come in. Then, Mrs. Doolin left, buying a ticket for Perry, Oklahoma. She was bound, it appeared, for her father's home, and Bill wired to have her watched there.

He himself took another line. As a federal officer, he had called on the postmaster at Burden to watch her mail. No letters passed to or from her husband. Her chief correspondent seemed to be Mrs. Pierce, keeper of the hotel at Ingalls. She was not forwarding letters between them. Nevertheless, she was a friend and she might know something. Bill drove to Ingalls. He had stopped there before.

Mr. Pierce kept the livery stable, and his wife, a handsome, energetic woman, ran the small hotel. She was affable and liked to talk. Bill did justice to her biscuits and home-made preserves, and sat through a long evening in her parlor. But when he tried to bring the conversation around to the outlaws and Doolin, the landlady shied off. At last he went to bed.

Next morning he sat on the little porch, cleaning his rifle. Mrs. Pierce was sweeping. Bill carelessly remarked on the report of a train robbery in Texas. "It looked like Doolin's work." Mrs. Pierce flared.

"Everything they lay onto Doolin! He's not even in Texas. He's been two months at a springs for rheumatism.

She patted a letter in her apron pocket. Bill reached out his hand. "Let me see that."

"No, no. It's none of your business! It's just . . ."

Reluctantly, she yielded the letter. It seemed harmless, anyway. Edith Doolin wrote her to get a ring which she had let a girl friend wear, and send it to her. Her husband was better, the springs seemed to help him. Where would that be?

"Hot Springs and the baths are sure good," Bill remarked. "I've known lots of people that went there."

But his eyes, veiled, were on Mrs. Pierce's face, and the quick gleam of satisfaction told him that his guess was wrong. Eureka Springs, not quite so famous, would be a quieter place to hide, and nearer. Bill finished cleaning his gun, and was soon on his way to Guthrie.

To John Hale, chief deputy, he said that he had a tip on Doolin and would be going after him. E. D. Nix, the marshal came in. How many men did he want?

"Not any. I think I can take him, if he's there." They both protested. "But Doolin's sworn not to be taken alive. He's a desperate man! He'd shoot you on sight."

"Not if he don't know me," returned Bill, with his quiet smile. "I'm going as a real detective–in disguise. That preacher coat of yours . . ."

In a moment he had slipped on the long-skirted Prince Albert which Marshal Nix, as a well-dressed dignitary, wore. It fitted well. He added the derby hat of Mr. Hale. The two stared at him. Though he had his clothes made by the best tailor in town, he had never worn hat or coat of these styles.

"It does make a difference. "I'd hardly know you on the street."

Tilghman Gets His Man

January 12, 1896, Bill reached Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Houses clung to the rocky, tree-clad hills. The stream from the larger springs flowed through the town, with bridges here and there. Where a spring gushed from a hillside, a half-circle of stone wall had been built, and steps leading down. A man bent over, filling a bottle to carry home. He came up the steps; a tall man, slightly stooped, wearing a neat suit, though in need of pressing; the pants down over boot tops; a wide cowboy hat; and golden, drooping mustache–Doolin himself. He walked with a cane, but not showing lameness. A bulge under his left arm told of the forty-five in a shoulder holster.

Bill dodged into the nearest shop, presently following his man at a safe distance. The outlaw crossed a small park with big trees, where a foot-bridge spanned a little stream. Beyond, and up a foot path, to a house perched on the hillside; a long flight of steps going up, and a sign, "Rooms."

Bill turned back, tracing his course thoughtfully. To take the man alive he must get the drop on him quickly, by surprise. With watchful glances lest Doolin should return, he studied the ground. When Doolin crossed the foot-bridge, if he could step out from behind that big tree with his shotgun–But the sight of a man with a shotgun would warn the outlaw, and he could see it a block away.

Going back to his hotel, Bill took his shotgun apart, wrapped it in papers and sought a carpenter shop. He explained what he wanted; a light wooden box, with a hinged lid that could be instantly opened, and long enough to contain the gun. It would be painted black, and have the appearance of a case for a musical instrument. With that, he could walk across the park, visible under the leafless trees, but not an object of suspicion. He would meet Doolin as he came toward town. An instant's concealment behind the large tree trunk and he could step out, with his gun on the outlaw as he crossed the foot-bridge. The carpenter promised to have the box ready that evening. Tomorrow, then.

Bill ate a noon dinner, studied again the park and the route that Doolin must travel, till he knew every detail. It was only two o'clock, and he had the afternoon to pass. Why not take a bath? There was the Basin bath house, which was reached from the main street by a short, wide bridge over the stream. A pleasant-faced, bald little man rose up and asked, "What can we do for you, sir?"

Bill's eye scanned the lobby. There were several loungers smoking and reading. At one side, a corner space was cut off for a cashier's stall; at the back a door marked "Baths"; near it a huge round-bellied stove, as tall as a man. There were bare, painted walls, scrubbed floor; a few wooden chairs, a bench in the corner back of the cashier's stall, partly screened by the large stove.

And on that bench sat Bill Doolin! The last man Bill wished to meet just then. Doolin held a newspaper before his face, reading. But hearing the proprietor's greeting he moved it to one side, peering with the wariness of the hunted outlaw upon the customer. Bill saw the movement from the corner of his eye, saw Doolin's face. Swifter than conscious thought, he acted.

"I want a bath," he said, easily, and stepping past the proprietor, opened the door marked "Baths." He stood in a little corridor, and even as he closed the door he flung his coat open, his six-shooter flashed into his hand. Had Doolin recognized him?

For a breathless instant he watched the door-knob, expecting it to turn. It did not move. Softly he grasped it, pushed the door open. Doolin still sat upon the bench, intent on his paper, no longer suspicious. Half crouching, his gun ready, keeping the big stove between himself and his quarry, Bill moved with noiseless feet. Then, with a leap, he was around the stove, facing the outlaw. His voice rang steel. "Bill, put up your hands!"

But quick as a striking snake, Doolin was on his feet, reaching for the gun in his shoulder holster. Bill's left hand grabbed for his wrist, but only caught the coat sleeve. Doolin strained to reach the gun.

With a panicked scramble, the other customers fled while the dismayed proprietor hovered near the door.

"Bill, you know me. Put up your hands!"

Doolin's eyes burned. He half nodded. But he still strained to get his gun. His sleeve ripped, and Bill felt it give. Doolin's fingers moved nearer . . an inch . . another . .

"Bill, don't make me kill you!"

Their eyes met. In the marshal's was power, purpose, an invincible spirit; in the outlaw the fury and desperation of the trapped wild beast. Two strong men; but one was stronger. Doolin's gaze faltered. His straining body relaxed, his arms moved upwards. Bill kept his gun steady.

"Come here," he commanded the proprietor. Nervously the little man approached. "Get his gun! His gun . . under his arm." Bill urged.

Now the man understood. He pulled back Doolin's coat, reached for the six-shooter, let go of it, and at the third grab, pulled it out. He tendered it to the officer.

"Take it away! I've got all the guns I need!" cried Bill. And to Doolin, "Turn around."

The outlaw turned facing the wall, and Bill with his gun against his back, ran his hands over him in search of other weapons.

"You can put your hands down now, Bill," he said. The handcuffs clicked. "Do you want to come along quietly? It's no use to start anything. I've got four men around here."

Bill missed his bath. Five minutes from the time he entered the bath-house he walked out with his prisoner. As he left the door, the proprietor rushed forward and held out Doolin's gun, a pearl-handled, silver-plated forty-five. Bill took it and stuck it down inside the front of his pants. A dozen or two men and boys came running up to see the excitement, but Bill had no time for explanations.

A train would be leaving at four o'clock. Doolin was ready to go. "Get me out of this lynching country," he said. Eureka Springs was not so far from Southwest City, and he feared Missouri officers might claim him. Bill took him to the bank, where he had a hundred dollars, then to his room. He made him stand in the corner, while he himself gathered up Doolin's few belongings. On the dresser was a little silver cup.

"Is this yours?"

Doolin swallowed, nodding. "I bought it for my baby boy," he said.

"Are you thinking of your baby now?" Wonder, a strange respect, sympathy, were in the marshal's voice.

"Yes," said Doolin. Bill turned and laid the little cup gently in the suitcase.

"I'll see that he gets it, Bill," he said.

On the way to the station, Bill got his own bag, which he had not unpacked, and sent a boy with a message to the carpenter. He would not need that gun-box now. Doolin asked that the shackles be taken off.

"I give you my word that I will make no trouble. You can go to sleep on the train if you want to. And you know my word is good."

"Well, you know that I am no sucker, Doolin; and a single false move on your part will end you right there."

He took off the handcuffs, and seated Doolin next the window, himself next the aisle, with his right side and his gun, away from the prisoner. Doolin looked about the platform, scanned the passengers coming into the car, keenly. At last he asked, "Where are your men?"

Bill settled himself in the seat with a slight relief of tension. A smile glimmered in his eyes.

"Doolin, I was just fooling you a little about that. There isn't anybody but me."

All his life he remembered the look the outlaw gave him; the savage, helpless rage of a trapped lobo; a man's heartbreak as he faced his doom.

The train pulled out.

It was Bill's second night on the train, with scarcely any sleep. He fought to keep awake as the train pounded across the corner of Missouri, and southern Kansas. At Arkansas City they changed to the Santa Fe, to reach Guthrie a little after ten o'clock. Bill sent a telegram.

At Perry, a young man walked down the aisle. "Hello, Bill," he greeted the marshal. He sat in the seat facing them. Doolin, not knowing he was a reporter, for the *State Capital* talked freely; told of his ill-health, and of his capture.

"The next I knew, he was standing four feet away from me and I was looking straight into his gun. I knew then that it was Bill Tilghman. If it had been anyone else I would have pulled my gun. I saw that if I made a move, he would kill me, so I put up my hands. . ."[26]

The perennial rumor which bobbed up whenever an important capture was made, that the outlaw had surrendered for the promise of a share in the reward money, had been whispered as soon as the news broke. The reporter asked Doolin, "Is it true?"

"They got me charged with the killing of three marshals at Ingalls," he said, grimly. "Does a man stick his neck in the rope for a few hundred dollars?"

At Lawrie, a switch stop north of Guthrie, Deputy Ed Kelly got on the train. "Great work, Bill!" he said with a warm handclasp.[27]

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[26] Guthrie, *Oklahoma State Capital*, january 1896.

[27] Ed Kelly was an early police chief of Guthrie, and served on the marshal's force. Later, he was officer for the Rock Island railroad, and rose to be district superintendent.

Doolin Meets his End

Chief Deputy John Hale opened the telegram. He was a quiet, gentlemanly little man, but now he let out something like an Osage war-whoop.

"He's done it! Bill's got him. He's got Doolin!" Men who heard it came dashing in, from the court clerk's and the U.S. attorney's offices.

"A telegram from Bill Tilghman," Mr. Hale explained. He's arrested Bill Doolin at Eureka Springs, and bringing him in on the ten-forty. Says 'Have a cab meet me.'"

The office was full. More crowded in the hall. "They said Doolin could never be taken alive." "Well, Bill Tilghman's got him!" A reporter dashed down the steps with coat streaming, and men in the street stared. "What's up?" The word spread. "Tilghman's captured Bill Doolin. He's bringing him in on the morning train."

It was nearly three hours till train time, and by the time the whistle sounded across the Cimarron bridge, half the population of Guthrie was gathered about the station, massed on the open ground, and the slope above it. The platform, and every freight-car top was full. It was estimated that five thousand persons waited for a sight of the famous outlaw.

Marshal Nix, John Hale and Deputy Heck Thomas met the train. "I've got a cab waiting, Bill," said Mr. Hale. The three officers with Ed Kelly fell in-before and behind Bill and his prisoner, while the crowd opened to let them pass. Heck Thomas rode with the driver, the others inside. At the marshal's office, the formalities of delivering the prisoner and making records were soon done. A string of men filed through to look upon the desperado. Presently came word from Mr. Perry, landlord of Guthrie's leading hotel, the Royal, inviting Tilghman, Mr. Nix and several other officers, with the prisoner, to a dinner at one o'clock.

Crowds surged through the hotel as they ate, and afterward the officers stood with Doolin in a sort of informal reception. Many women were in the line, and Doolin mustered a smile and polite replies when they spoke to him. Bill sought an easy chair and a few moments' rest. The last twenty-four hours had been distinctly strenuous. But many sought him out to shake his hand and congratulate him.

"Over there's the real hero," said the district attorney. "Bill Tilghman."

At three o'clock, the steel gates of the federal jail closed upon Doolin, and Bill's job was done. He returned the borrowed garments which had indeed served well. For Doolin confessed that he had recognized Bill when he entered the bath house, but the different appearance in dress, and the way in which he had hurried on to the bath rooms, made him believe he was mistaken.

Men spoke enviously of the five thousand dollar rewards coming, forgetting the old proverb of "many a slip." The rewards were nearly all conditioned on "arrest and conviction," and conviction was yet to come.

The express company, however, did pay Bill three hundred dollars at once; and this was all he ever got. Just after getting it, he was approached by a man he knew, for a loan, with a large diamond ring as security. Bill let him have one hundred and fifty dollars, which was never repaid. Bill never had cared to buy a ring for himself, even in the free-money cattle days. But he wore this one and became greatly attached to it, calling it his "Doolin ring," since it was a permanent reminder of the capture. It was on his finger when he was killed.

Doolin was to be tried at Stillwater, on the Ingalls killings. He agreed with Bill and Mr. Hale to plead guilty when arraigned, with the promise from the U.S. attorney of a fifty-year sentence, the same as had been given Arkansas Tom, member of the gang who was captured in that fight. But in the court room Doolin answered, "Not guilty." There was nothing to do but bind him over for trial and take him back to jail. Bill, riding beside him in the back seat of the spring wagon, asked: "Doolin, why did you go back on your word that way? You're likely to hang if you go to trial."

The outlaw spoke softly. "I'll tell you, Mr. Tilghman, fifty years is a long time; and I believe there's a chance to beat that federal jail."

The federal jail at Guthrie was a long, plain, two-story building of stone, fitted inside with the usual steel-barred entrance and front office. In the jail proper, the cells were steel cages set in the big room, and not reaching to the ceiling. The rest of the space was the "run-around" where prisoners were allowed to exercise, and many of them slept; for there were always more than the cells would hold. Those regarded as most dangerous were locked in the cells at night. The second floor had similar arrangements, save that the entrance was at the side, reached by a narrow outside stair.

Doolin had been a well-behaved prisoner, and having lately had an attack of his rheumatic fever, was not put in a cell. Bill, however, had warned the head jailer to watch him. There was in the jail a large, powerful Negro, held on a minor charge. To him Doolin said, confidentially:

"Did you see those two white men talking to the jailer out in front? They're officers from Mississippi, and they're waiting for papers to take you back there on a charge of assaulting a white woman."

"But I neveh done it!" protested the other.

"That's no difference–if they say you did."

Too well the Negro knew the terror of his people, the tales of lynchings and tortures. A Negro accused of such a crime was already held guilty. By skilful words dropped in the next few days, Doolin had him reduced to a state of terrified desperation, ready to do anything.

Lock-up time was nine o'clock. On the night of july 5, as usual, one guard, leaving his gun, entered to lock the cages, while the other stood with his gun at the door. Doolin approached the door, and the Negro, as he had told him, also came to the bars, reaching through to get a drink of water from the pail. Doolin suddenly threw his weight against the unlocked door, which flew open, knocking back the guard behind it; and the big Negro sprang through and upon him. Doolin snatched his gun. Both guards were quickly marched into cells, bound and gagged. Doolin, in command, gave orders, sternly kept all quiet, and unlocked the door. Thirty-seven prisoners slipped out and off in the darkness. A few, who had short sentences to serve, saw no advantage in escape.

Weak from illness, Doolin halted a young couple returning from a visit at the neighboring town of Marshall, just on the outskirts of Guthrie. With apologies to the young lady, he took their rig, telling his name and that he had just escaped. The officers found the rig a few days later. But Doolin had vanished.

More than forty years later, the life story of Eugene Manlove Rhodes was published, written by his wife. It solved the old mystery. Doolin, perhaps getting aid from friends, and perhaps going part way on the train, had reached the New Mexico ranch of Rhodes. Here he stayed for several weeks, recuperating, making plans to bring his wife and baby here and start a new life. One day, as Mrs. Rhodes records, his quickness with a rope saved his host from being killed by a vicious horse. Very soon after this he left, "going straight to his death."

Mrs. Doolin, back at her father's home in Oklahoma, was closely watched. One day she brought a team to the blacksmith shop of Tom and Charlie Noble, to have them shod. That meant a journey. In that country most horses went unshod. A horseman rode through the night. Heck Thomas at Guthrie received the word, rode to Bee Dunn's place near Ingalls the next day, and the day after, with a posse, went on to Lawson, about fifteen miles northeast. They waited on the road near the Ellsworth home that night. There was a barking of dogs. Presently, a man leading a saddled horse came walking down the road in the moonlight, a winchester in his hands.

"Throw up your hands, Doolin!" cried Heck Thomas. Then, a roar of guns, and a limp body lying in the road. He had fired one shot; but had received a charge of buckshot in his body and died almost instantly. Doolin's career was ended. Heck Thomas received six hundred dollars which he divided with members of the posse and his informants. The main rewards offered for arrest *and conviction* were never to be paid.

The same envious story bobbed up again, slightly altered, and was now and again repeated for many years. Doolin, they said, had died of consumption, and his father-in-law had made a deal with the officers for a share in the reward to be given to his daughter. Doolin's body was then set up and the charge of shot fired into it.

The record of the coroner's inquest[28] and the necessity they would have to "fix" that official and a number of others, as well as the financial records of the governmental agencies and the firms which offered rewards, show the falsity of this story, which pretends to trace to the authority of an uncle of Mrs. Doolin.

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[28] In the author's possession.

Home Shadows: A Feud

Though he was in Guthrie in the marshal's office every week or two, Bill was able to keep supervision of his farm and stock. He had a dependable man, Tom Avery, who had been with him for some years, who looked after things while he was away. Other labor could be hired of neighboring farm boys.

Flora's health was failing, and she made long visits to her mother at Dodge City. William and Amanda, with Hattie, had moved from their farm to a cottage in Chandler.

Court was in session, late in march, 1897. Bill, riding northward with a summons to serve, glanced back and noticed a strange, greenish-black cloud in the southwest, a blot in a clear sky. Ten minutes later its shadow overspread the world; trees and bushes about him whipped wildly, and a deep-toned roar, mingled with a thin whistling scream, filled the air. A funnel-shaped cloud swept past behind him and was gone.

Riding as he had never done since that day of his flight from the Indian war parties, he covered the few miles back to town. On the hill where Chandler had stood, was wreckage with but one building remaining whole – the Presbyterian church, where men were already carrying the dead and injured. Even the one brick building had crumpled. Smoke from the ruins here and there, added new horrors.

One of these fires came from the place where his father's dwelling had stood. William returning from town, had escaped unhurt by flinging himself down on the steep slope of the hill as the storm struck. He had already pulled Amanda from the wreckage, her face cut and side injured. Hattie, they could see, unconscious, under the square piano, whose sturdy solidity saved her from being crushed. The flames were licking at the dry wreckage, and Bill toiled with others, hacked and lifted, until they could crawl in and drag her out. The doctor at the church-hospital treated the worst cases. Hattie and Amanda were carried here, and Bill hastened to join in the general rescue work. Late in the afternoon, he rode out to the farm, bringing the spring wagon and quilts, to carry his mother and Hattie back. He loaded in too, food for the stricken townsfolk.

All their clothes and household goods had been burned, and Amanda's side developed a baffling lump that always caused her distress. But in a few weeks they were able to move back to their farm.

Bill was soon riding on a difficult detective case, the Bland-McElroy feud. Over the line, in the Creek country, trouble had grown between ranchers, one George McElroy and his father, holding land as an intermarried citizen; and two brothers, Bruce and El Miller, who leased from a Creek Indian. A close friend of the McElroys was Dr. J. C. Bland, a physician, also an inter-married citizen with considerable farm holdings.

Accusations had been made on both sides, of cattle rustling and harboring outlaws; the Millers were arrested several times, but always freed from lack of evidence. It was said the arrests were caused by the McElroy faction, to drive the Millers out of the country.

First of the trail of death was one Ira Miller, no relation to the brothers, who, the story goes, was hired by McElroy "to smoke out" Bruce and El. With him was Henry Houk, one of the McElroy faction. They sought Red Buck and Bitter Creek, members of the Doolin gang, with a plan to waylay and kill Bruce Miller. The two agreed; then warned Bruce Miller to stay in town and let his presence be certainly known there, all evening. They met Ira Miller and Houk at the lonely spot on the road which had been appointed. There, they suddenly drew their guns, informing the assassins that Bruce Miller was their friend, and that they themselves were the ones to be "smoked out." Houk somehow escaped, and fled to inform McElroy of the miscarriage of their plan. Ira Miller was killed.

Another blow soon followed. Spies must have watched, for the enemy struck when the family of Bruce Miller had gone to his brother's home. The place was surrounded. Dutch John, a farm hand, going out to feed the horses, was shot down. Sam Patch, another hand, was captured and held all day, without harm. He afterwards was the principal witness against the mob, identifying McElroy and Bland as their leaders. He said there were eighteen men.

Shots came intermittently on the house and Bruce Miller, within, and his six-year-old boy were hit. Mrs. Elizabeth Miller, going out to spread a quilt over the body of Dutch John, was fired upon and wounded. They could see the smoke as the buildings at Bruce Miller's place were burned. Destruction of the whole family seemed certain; but night came with the extra darkness of a storm, and they escaped up a nearby canyon. Three days later, this ranch also was burned. Their enemies had "smoked the Millers out."

Federal warrants were issued charging George McElroy, Dr. Bland, and four others with the murder of Dutch John. One of them, Sennett, was killed at a dance before the trial. It was almost a year before the others faced the bar, the trial lasting eight days, and resulting in acquittal.

But the trail of blood went on. Bruce Miller who was an important witness, now was working in a saloon at Ingalls. A bullet fired through a window one night, killed him. This was in the Western district, and Bill was assigned to the case. The identity of the assassin was never established. But Bill found other evidence, and since he held a commission also in the Eastern district, he could work as he found necessary in the far spread lines of this case.

Charges of arson and assault with intent to kill had been filed against the members of the mob. McElroy and Bland, he found, had admitted to several persons, just after the burning of Miller's place, that they had been present, and attempted to justify themselves by claiming that the Millers were a bad lot who ought to be driven from the country. This, in fact, was the line of defense first taken at the trial; one of the notable cases of the court, from the prominence of the defendants, the large number of witnesses–one hundred and fifty–and the number of violent deaths involved.

The court promptly ruled out such pleading. If the Millers were bad people, as alleged, the courts were there to handle them, and there was no excuse for mob violence. Defense then tried an alibi. Within thirty minutes after they retired, the jury brought in a verdict of guilty. McElroy and Dr. Bland were given sentences of twelve years each, and the other three men nine years.

The case was appealed, and again the assassins struck. This time it was three victims: an aged man, Date Miller, brother of Bruce and El, his wife and young son. All of them witnesses at the trial, were slain in their beds at night, by shots fired through the open window. Next was Dr. Beggs, also shot down at night in his home. Other witnesses fled the country in terror. When the case again came up, the district attorney stood with empty hands, his witnesses slain or vanished. He could only *nolle pros*[29] the case, so the convicted men escaped punishment.

At last a long domestic unhappiness came to a head. Flora, vivacious and fond of admiration, and of a jealous temperament, found the farm life tiresome. She brooded on Bill's absences, persuading herself that official business was a pretext for seeking other women. With tuberculosis fixing its hold–though she would never acknowledge it, she only had "throat trouble"–her mental attitude became worse. Nor was there any adequate treatment for her illness. Rest, and diet, and sanatoriums were unknown then. She brought suit for a divorce. Bill went to her lawyer in Guthrie.

"I'm not going to be the goat," he told him. "I'll file a cross petition myself."

They agreed on a separation and property settlement, she to have the home in Guthrie and a small income, and to keep the two younger children, His daughter Dot, then eighteen, became the chatelaine of his household. He was able to find a good farm woman for working housekeeper.

Little more than a year later, after three months of invalidism at Dodge City, Flora was back at Guthrie, and failing. She sent for Bill to come. "Death, the Great Reconciler" was with them. But she seemed stronger, and he went on an official trip. The end came suddenly, while he was away.

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[29] Ordinary term for *nolle prosequi*, "To be unwilling to prosecute" or "follow up." Action taken when the Prosecuting Attorney feels that he can not go on with the trial.

Justice for Indians

Only a raw newcomer in Oklahoma worried about Indians. They kept to themselves, mostly, and were harmless. But in december came a tale of horror such as the territory seldom knew; and as it chanced, an Indian was concerned.

A Mrs. Laird, wife of a tenant farmer in the old Pottawatomie country, her husband absent from home, had been assaulted and killed in her dooryard, by a young Indian. Her two children, a boy of eight and his sister younger, watched by the body all night to drive the hogs away; and in the morning went to summon neighbors. The hogs had torn the body before help arrived.

The community went mad. A crowd of men gathered. They seized two Indian youths, Palmer Sampson and Lincoln McGeisey, took them before the boy, who stoutly declared that neither was the one who had killed his mother. He knew Lincoln McGeisey well. The murderer had a scar on his face, and rode a bay pacing pony with a star. This youth had a bay pony, and that was enough for the mob, which wanted vengeance and not proofs.

"Hang 'em both!" they yelled. "No! Hanging's too good for them." Maddened with mob rage and with whiskey, they took the two Indians to a remote place, fastened them to trees by iron trace chains, and burned them with slow fires. Bill, riding through the night, came to the place and surveyed the grisly scene. He found shreds of cooked flesh, ten feet away, flung from the hands of one victim as he struggled.

The wires hummed to Washington. Congress rose in wrath. "We have spent seventy-five years and millions of dollars, trying to civilize the Indian, and these men in one night have undone the work of years!" declared one member, on the floor of the House. They voted a special appropriation of forty thousand dollars to find and punish the mob murderers. It was placed in the hands of Horace Speed, U.S. attorney for the Western district of Oklahoma.

For many days Bill rode through the rough blackjack hills and tangled bottoms of the North Canadian. He stopped at cabins, meeting sullen answers and glowering looks. If he asked for a meal he was turned away. Twice a bullet zipped through the leaves above him or threw up dirt in the road.

But he had gathered evidence. He and Heck Thomas set out in a spring wagon with their own food and camp outfit. And one of them rode always in the back of the wagon, his gun ready, watching behind. It was, in truth, one of the most dangerous assignments that Bill ever had, since most of the country was hostile to the officers. Nevertheless, they arrested fifteen men, members of the mob, and took them to Shawnee, the county seat.

The sheriff joked with the prisoners. Bottles of beer for them came from the saloon. Lawyers appeared, and the county clerk made out bail for them as fast as he could write. Anybody's name, even the poorest tenant farmer, was good on the bonds. They turned them all loose pending trial. It was plain that they would go free on trial. No local jury would convict them. County officers, looking for re-election, would not try very hard to do so.

The marshals rode back to Guthrie and reported to Mr. Speed. He paced the floor.

"You're right. They'll never convict them . . But the Department of Justice and Congress. They expect us to bring that mob to justice!"

Bill rose and studied the map upon the wall. He turned to the attorney with a cold fire in his eyes.

"Listen, Mr. Speed. They made monkeys of us down there. But there's another play coming. That mob went just a little too far across the line in Seminole country for their party."

Speed halted, throwing up his massive, handsome head. That line! The crime then was in the Indian country and under federal jurisdiction.

"You've got it!" he cried. "They'll laugh at the federal government, eh? We'll show them that isn't done."

Armed with federal warrants, Bill and Heck Thomas once more rounded up their prisoners, and took them by rail to Fort Smith. Mr. Speed handled the cases brilliantly, and won national distinction in legal circles. It was said to be the first time that convictions had been obtained on members of a mob. Eight of them were sentenced for from five to fifteen years. And Mr. Speed gave full credit to Bill. Only his skilful and painstaking work in gathering evidence had enabled the government to prove its case.

But the murderer of Mrs. Laird was still at large. Bill's first clue came from Wewoka. Kano Harjo's father had traded his good pacing pony to the Seminole medicine man for "murder medicine," that is, a charm against being haunted by the ghost of his victim. Now there were many bay ponies in the country, but a pacer was rare; a pacer with a roached mane. That pony, Mrs. Laird's little boy had described accurately. The Indian, he said, was without a saddle, and had first asked his mother for one. Bill found several persons who had seen the Harjo pony in that neighborhood on the day of the murder. Young Harjo had traded his saddle for a jug of whiskey at Violet Springs, and ridden on to his uncle's house, which would take him past the Laird place.

Thomas McGeisey, father of the mob's victim, told him that Harjo had written to his sister at Emahaka mission, acknowledging that he had killed the woman. They secured the letters, and Bill arrested Kano Harjo, taking him to the federal jail at Guthrie. But the difficulty of handling Indian witnesses, and constant delays, resulted eventually in giving him bond, and the case did not come up for trial.

The Jennings Gang

Red Buck had been killed in a gun battle with officers, in western Oklahoma, while Bill Doolin lay in jail. One member of the gang remained, Dick West, alias Little Dick. He had disappeared, and was thought to be somewhere in the Indian country. Late in summer of the next year, 1897, he became a member of the Jennings gang, next to win notoriety in the territory.

This gang was different from the others. All except Little Dick were amateurs. Al and Frank Jennings were sons of Judge Jennings, probate judge in Pottawatomie county. He had formerly held a like post in Woodward county. Al Jennings had been county attorney at El Reno, but failed of re-election and went to Woodward, where a shooting affair took place between Temple Houston and Jack Love, and Ed and John Jennings, also lawyers. Ed Jennings was killed. Judge Jennings then moved to Pottawatomie county.

Al Jennings lived with his father at Tecumseh, with no regular occupation; he was known to be consorting with hard characters in that region. But in official parlance, "there was no warrant out for him."

Pat and Morris O'Malley had been posse-men for some of the deputy marshals, but had been involved in padding accounts. The Department of Justice wired an order for their discharge, and that they should never again be employed in any government service. The

Jennings, Al and Frank, the two O'Malleys, and Dick West formed the Jennings gang. The first exploit of which they were accused was the holdup of a Santa Fe train at Edmond, a few miles north of Oklahoma City, on august 18, 1897. They stopped the train but were scared and fled when the conductor, not knowing the reason for the stop, shouted to the engineer from the rear platform, "What are you doing there?" The men by the express car turned and ran. Within twenty-four hours Bill had a sworn statement from the man who had held their horses, and who had had enough of such ineffective banditry.

Warrants were issued against all five. Another unsuccessful attempt to stop an MKT train near Muskogee; plans for robbing the express at Purcell and a bank at Minco, which were given up because of guards posted there; and the Jennings gang made its one success.

Night trains were guarded, so the gang compelled a switchman to flag a Rock Island train in the daytime, in an unsettled part of Chickasaw country. They tried to blow the express safe with ordinary dynamite sticks and failed, though the car was shattered. They then robbed the passengers, getting about three hundred dollars; sixty dollars apiece, and four hundred dollars in jewelry. Al Jennings was recognized when his mask slipped. They secured from the wrecked express car a two-gallon jug of whiskey and a bunch of bananas, and fled.

Bill and Heck Thomas loaded saddle horses on a car, which the Santa Fe attached to a passenger train, and ran south, with the intent to cut off the robbers if they headed for Judge Jennings's home. But the outlaws took a different route, riding west through the uninhabited part of the reservation, then circling back to a farm house on the Cottonwood river, southwest of Guthrie. They divided their loot, giving their host a fine watch which the officers recovered. Here Dick West left them. After a day or two of rest, the others followed down the Cimarron river, to the Spike S ranch in the Creek country.

On the way, they stopped at the inland town of Cushing and got the storekeeper to open his store at night by saying they wanted burial clothes for a man who had just died. Then they took some tobacco, and a suit of heavy work clothing, all that the store afforded, for each one of them. Their own clothes were in rags, and it was now cold weather.

Deputy Bud Ledbetter, in the Eastern district, soon located them and with a posse came to the Spike S ranch, where a gun battle took place december 1. Al and Frank Jennings were wounded, but the gang escaped into the timber. On december 6, Marshal Ledbetter captured all four.

This ended the career of the Jennings Gang, covering a period of *four months.*

Al Jennings received a sentence of fifty years for the Rock Island robbery. The others, tried at a later time, got only five years each. Al Jennings was sent to the state prison at Columbus, Ohio, where many federal prisoners were kept. Persistent work by his brother John, and the intercession of Judge Amos Ewing, of Kingfisher, who was a friend of President McKinley, resulted in a commutation of his sentence to five years, the same as the others had received.

Fellow prisoners with Jennings at Columbus were Bill Raidler, and O. Henry. And in later years Jennings, with Will Irwin, reared on this slender basis of fact a great fabrication of outlawry and heroism, gallantry and sob-stuff, which was embodied in "Beating Back" sold by Irwin to the *Saturday Evening Post,* and in several subsequent stories. Marshal Jack Abernathy, some years later, induced President Theodore Roosevelt to restore Al Jennings to citizenship, and this paper with the word "pardon" upon it was displayed at theaters where the movie of "Beating Back" was played.

Bill got information that Dick West was staying on Thompson creek southwest of Guthrie, and on january 1, he and Heck Thomas went to the place, but found him gone.

Bill soon learned that he was back, and the marshal, then Wm. B. Fossett, himself led the posse, composed of Sheriff Rinehart, Bill and Heck Thomas. They found West at the stable, and called on him to surrender. Instead, he fired at them and turned to run. One shot ended his life.

Arkansas Tom, trapped in an upper room, had surrendered when they started to burn the building. Little Bill Raidler had fired till his gun was empty. Only those two, and Doolin, now dead in face of capture, were taken alive. Dick West completed the tale of the Doolin gang.

The Sheriff

The outlaw gangs were exterminated, and the marshal's work had dwindled to small cases and routine. Bill saw other work at hand, however. In 1900 he announced his candidacy for sheriff of Lincoln county. Since its organization, no Democrat had been elected in this Republican stronghold. His friends shook their heads.

It was a large county, with its eastern border the Creek Indian country, wild and sparsely settled, and refuge for tough characters.

There was plenty of official work to do in Lincoln county. Bill set about his campaign. He was already widely acquainted at farm houses where he had stopped for meals or lodging or information; and with the farmers who had come to him for pure-bred hogs or horse service or fine seed corn. These friends worked for him. He made new friends personally. And he won the election by a plurality of four hundred eighty-two.

Two years later, he was re-elected with a plurality of 1,081, the largest ever attained by any candidate for any office in the county.

One other Democrat, a tall and ambitious young lawyer, J. B. A. Robertson, was elected with him in 1900, as county attorney. Their work, of course, was closely associated.

Chandler had been rebuilt after the cyclone. A small upstairs annex to the two-story wooden courthouse was Bill's office. The jail was at the back of the courthouse square, a typical "early territorial." It was an oblong structure, built of layers of two-by-sixes, spiked together, and covered, walls and roof, with corrugated sheet iron. A row of steel cells to accommodate twelve men was placed inside the room, and the front office partitioned off with a steel-barred door. Here the jailer had a desk and bed and chair. A stove in front and one in the jail part furnished heat in winter. Water was piped in, and there was an indoor toilet with an outside cesspool. A six-by-six-foot lean-to, opening into the yard, was used as needed. All around the jail ran a twelve-foot board fence topped by four rows of barbed wire.

Bill's first work was a general house cleaning. The old bedding was carried out, washed, some of it burned. Fresh prairie hay filled the bed ticks. The inmates were required to give the whole interior a good scrubbing, and themselves as well. Bill purchased a sprayer and insecticide. In a month, he had rid the place of the crawling vermin, and saw that it was kept so. As spring came, he planted moon-flowers about the fence, and the rank vines soon hid its ugliness. All through the summer, the great white flowers filled the evening air with their fragrance.

Neal Brown, his old partner, was his jailer, and for under-sheriff he chose William H. Crume, who quickly learned the business of the office.

Bill himself was thus free for his general work. He had one and sometimes two full-time deputies, besides several over the county. Most of the farmers belonged to the Anti-horsethief association; and to each local group where a deputy was to be placed, Bill said, "You name a good man, and I'll appoint him." Telephone lines now reached the little towns in the county, and thus reports came more quickly to the sheriff's office. Bill went riding.

In the first month of his shrievalty, nine horses were stolen. Eight horse-thieves promptly found themselves scrubbing floors in the county jail and, at the next term of court, went up to the penitentiary. The eight horses were returned to the owners. The ninth man had a good start and got away, but Bill recovered the horse.

The effect was astonishing, even to Bill. In the four years he held office, not another horse was stolen in the county. Within thirty days after he retired, stealing began again.

He purchased a large brick residence in the block adjoining the courthouse, leased his farm and moved his family to town (*see plate* 9). He had taken the two younger children after their mother's death.

The move had a business angle, as well as convenience. The sheriff was allowed a certain amount each day per prisoner, for food. Previous sheriffs had let the meals by contract. But with his experience in camp cooking, and the restaurant in New Mexico, Bill saw good profit here. He himself showed his cook-housekeeper how to prepare the quantity meals, gave her a selection of foods, and planned a system. He installed a bathtub and hot water in the house, and built a summer kitchen with windows all around.

Some jails in the territory fed only twice a day; and other sheriffs expressed amazement at the meals he gave. "You can't make any money that way," they said. But Bill knew otherwise. Not that the jail meals were elaborate. There was little variety, and vitamins had not yet been discovered. Coffee, beans or potatoes, with one green or canned vegetable, was the rule; salt pork, occasionally fresh meat; gravy, and cereals for breakfast. Bill brought things from the farm for a treat; peaches, apples, melons and turnips. In the winter, he himself made up a great tubful of hominy, flavorsome with wood ashes. The food was well cooked, and often some from the same pot was served on the family table. The jailer came down, with a trusty, to carry the big camp coffee pot and the basket-like container in which the individual food pans were packed. These were of tin, oblong and rather deep; and each had a number. Each prisoner had his numbered pan while he stayed, and when done eating he washed it.

That spring Bill arrested a well-to-do farmer, Ames by name, because of a family fight. Ames felt superior to the other prisoners, and refused to contribute to the jail fund, which supplied tobacco and other small necessities for all. Particularly he objected to the service.

"I'm a taxpayer," he declared, "and they're not going to make me wash dishes."

"All right," said Tom Bridge, then jailer. "Your next meal will be served in your pan, just as it is."

Noon came, and each man came to the barred door and received his pan as his number was called. In a moment Ames came back, raging. Cursing the jailer and the cook he flung the contents of his pan through the bars, upon the office floor. Swearing and boisterous conduct also were against the jail rules.

"I want to see the sheriff," roared Ames. "You send for the sheriff, I'll tell him . . ."

The jailer obliged, and as Bill presently arrived Mr. Ames poured forth his wrath.

"My pan wasn't washed!" he cried. "I'm not going to eat from a dirty dish by . . ."

Bill eyed him coolly. "The jailer explained the rules, didn't he? You wash your own. And as long as you're in here, you'll keep the rules same as anybody else."

Ames really expressed himself then. The other prisoners, forgetting to eat their own meal, listened with awe and interest. But their sympathy was by no means with him.

"Unlock the door, Tom!" snapped Bill. His six-shooter poked into Ames's middle. "Come out of here!"

His voice, the cold fire in his eyes, as much as the gun, subdued the irate farmer. He walked out meekly, and Bill marched him around to the side cubby hole which had only a ventilation slit, high up. A few hours in this "solitary" he figured, should make him a good prisoner.

But Ames got more than was intended. The other prisoners gathered close to the wall, where he could hear them; and they talked.

"That's tough," they said. "The sheriff must be awful mad to put a white man in that nigger cell."

"The place is just alive with graybacks," added another; which was a most devilish suggestion. Ames began to feel things crawling over him. Some one called a question.

"Are they pretty bad?" Ames began to scratch, and replied that he could feel them biting him. Somebody had another idea.

"Why that place ain't been cleaned out since they put that dead baby in there, that was found out in the woods," he told his companions. The victim fell as readily for this suggestion. He sniffed. "Yes, I can smell it!"

It was rare sport. They speculated on how long the sheriff would keep him there, embroidering their talk with all the horrors they could invent. Presently a meek voice sounded.

"Boys, I didn't do just right about that money. Here's a dollar for the fund"–he poked it through a crack–"and I wish some of you would ask the sheriff to let me out. Tell him I'll keep the rules."

One rule, however, was that only the sheriff could release from the dark cell. And Bill had ridden out of town. Ames stayed there until 10 P.M., pacing the narrow limits, too wrought up to sit on the floor, on account of the dead baby having been there–as he thought–; scratching, feeling vermin on his body. From then on, he was a model prisoner.

The eight horse-thieves soon had company. Though the jail had cells for but twelve, Bill at one time had thirty-seven men within; most of them slept on cots in the "run-around." Following one term of court, he took sixteen prisoners to the penitentiary at Lansing, Kansas, where the territory boarded its convicts.

One man escaped, a Negro known as Slim, who managed to crawl through the narrow ventilator hole in the foundation, after breaking a hole in the floor. Bill caught him in Omaha, Nebraska, after a trail of two thousand miles; but turned him over to the Arkansas authorities.

Two or three murder suspects were usually in jail, their cases coming up at each term of court. There was the usual variety of causes. Bill had one mystery which was never solved. Two women, one middle-aged and blind, and the other in her late twenties, with a child about two years old, had come by train to Stroud. They stopped a week at the hotel and the child died. They had it hastily buried and left. But people about the hotel became suspicious and reported to the sheriff. The child's body was found to contain poison.

It was not an easy task to trace the two women, even though the blindness of one was a mark. However, Bill soon arrested them. The evidence was conclusive, and both were sentenced. But the identity of the child—for neither of the two was its mother—or the motive for the murder, he could not learn. Bill believed that the child had been put out of the way to secure an inheritance.

One of his most difficult detective cases was that of the Ames murderer. This was a double killing, one victim being the wife of that Ames who had been made a good prisoner. Ames himself left the country after his release from jail, and Mrs. Ames, with her grown daughter, Adelia Smith, and a hired man, were at the home.

Rising from his bed to ride through a cold november rain, in response to an appeal for help, Bill hurried to the farm. Mrs. Ames and the hired man lay dead in a cave near the house, while her daughter, shot in the shoulder, had escaped to a neighbor's house and given the alarm. She described the man who had come to the door as they ate supper. He asked for food, then suddenly pulled a gun. He herded the three outside and into the cave; an outdoor cellar for food storage, also a cyclone refuge. He fired three shots down the doorway, hitting them all, then apparently went into the house. Presently he came back and called the young woman, ordering her to produce the money which, it was rumored, they kept. She assured him they had none, except the small amount in her purse, but offered to write him a check. He refused, and still insisted that she must have hidden money. "I'm going to kill you anyhow," he told her.

"Let me write my sister's address, then," she begged. He half way assented, and she started to get a pencil. At this moment, they heard the hired man, Jackson, crying out and groaning. The man left her, and fired two more shots down the cave, killing him. But the shots told the young woman his whereabouts. She jerked up a window on the opposite side of the house, and fled. It was already dark and raining. She cut through the brushy pasture and reached the neighbor's house.

Rain had obliterated tracks. But Miss Smith gave a good description of the killer. Such a man had been seen by several persons in Chandler in the afternoon, inquiring for the location of Ames's home. In the early dawn after the murder, a local justice had seen such a man near the railroad track not far from the Ames farm.

Yet the trail was dead. Here and there Bill sought, watched Oklahoma City, which, as a railroad center, was the haunt of most of the wanted men, if only passing through. At last, a gang of thieves was arrested at Shawnee. Jim or Alvin Woods was charged with carrying a weapon, but soon released. Bill trailed him to El Reno, for now he was sure of his man. A year and seven days after the murder, he brought him back to Chandler.

Fingerprints and ballistics were not then a part of judicial evidence. But the man visibly started when Adelia Smith was brought to the jail. He threw back his head and squinted, in vain effort to make his face look different, but she picked him out immediately, from the group of prisoners. Others who had seen him in Chandler, and the justice who saw him along the track, also identified him. He received a life sentence.

Yeggman's Soup

Bill was adept at making soups and stew, on occasion. But now in his sheriff business he became acquainted with a new and potent variety, the dynamite soup of the safe-blower. This was the heydey of yeggmen, experts who made a business of cracking safes. In the early months of Bill's term, there were two such incidents in his county.

On the night of july 4, citizens of Stroud thought nothing of a rather loud "boom." But to the bank clerk who slept in a small room at the side of the bank office, it was like the volley of a firing squad. Four men seized him and left him bound upon his bed, while they prepared to blow the safe. He knew what they were doing, and through fifteen minutes of horror he lay expecting death.

But Robert Burns, the cracksman, was an expert in his line, and took pride in it. He knew how to fix the charge to blow just the safe door loose, without wrecking the premises. He did so here. But the safe had an inner door, which was jammed by the explosion so he could not open it. After a few minutes trying, he gave up and all four left.

It was several hours, however, before the bank clerk could free himself and give the alarm; nor could he give a good description of the robbers. However, in a short time, Bill captured Burns, Jimmie Morgan and Ed Hoskins. In the Kansas penitentiary, Burns and

Hoskins had planned to rob a bank in Oklahoma when they got out, and had joined with the other two in Oklahoma City. Ill-advisedly, they picked a bank in Lincoln county. Burns had been a marine diver in employ of the government, and in that business had learned to make and use the "soup." This he prepared from stick dynamite by a process of dissolving it in hot water, and skimming off the top, which was a reasonably pure nitroglycerine. He had a phial, containing only a few drops, upon him when arrested.

Bill decided to try its strength on a big old stump which was an eyesore in the courthouse yard. The demonstration was convincing. The stump flew into a thousand pieces, skyward, and windows all around the square rattled. Court was in session, and Undersheriff Bill Crume came running down.

"The Judge wants to know about that explosion!"

John H. Burford was one of the great and beloved men who made Oklahoma. For fourteen years he was a justice of the supreme court and most of that time chief justice, also holding regular district sessions. He motioned the lawyers to silence as Bill stood before him.

"Judge," he said, soberly. "I didn't mean to disturb the court. I just fired my old six-shooter at a rat in the jail yard."

Later when the judge learned the truth, he laughed and agreed that it wasn't wise to make such experiments public, or to make them at all.

"It was lucky there wasn't any more, or I'd have blown up the whole courthouse," Bill used to say afterward.

One day Burns, in jail, asked for a private interview. He was a little man, cocky and self-assured.

"Beel," he said, "the First National is one hundred t'ousand strong."

"Yes?" said Bill. Burns leaned near him.

"Beel, we can get her!"

"What's the idea?" asked the sheriff.

"You git the stuff and I'll cook her up on the jail stove. The byes won't know what I'm doin'. I'll tell 'em it's for rheumatism. Then some dark rainy night, you take me out an' I'll do the job. We'll bury the swag an' when I've done my time, we'll divide it. You can keep me handcuffed if you want to."

Bill laughed, then eyed him sharply. The scheme was fantastic but feasible.

"You're talking to the wrong man, Burns," he said. "I'm here to stop crime, not share in it. That business has brought you where you are to-day, and it will be the end of you if you don't give it up."

Spoken as a truism, his words were a prophecy. Burns served his term, getting a light sentence because he turned state's evidence. About four years later, Bill was summoned to Tulsa to see if he could shed light on a mystery. In a wooded spot near the Arkansas river were signs of a camp fire, and an explosion, the ground torn up and tree branches broken. Hanging in a tree was a human arm, that of a small man, with an anchor and other devices tattooed upon it. Bill and his old jailer, Neal Brown, both could identify this as the remains of the cracksman Bobby Burns. No other bit was found. The making of a batch of "soup" had evidently gone wrong, and as Bill predicted, had literally made an end of him.

One other bank robbery occurred within his first six months, and he caught and convicted those men also. There were safe blowings over the territory, but not another one in Lincoln county during the four years Bill was sheriff. As with the horse stealing, it was entirely stopped. Among the underworld went the word that it was best to keep away from Bill's domain. Within the first six months after he went out of office five safes were blown in Lincoln county.

Only once had he a serious threat of a mob, and this he forestalled. A drunken man waiting as a "Frisco" train rolled past, fired a shot at it, and by chance killed the brakeman. Bill arrested him and he was convicted of manslaughter. But at Sapulpa, the railroad division point, the many employees of the road were wrathful. "Manslaughter!" they said. "He ought to be hung." "Hang him from that bridge right near where he killed Bob!"

The talk surged into action. With secrecy, they laid their plans. It was the custom to take the prisoners after each term of court, on the east-bound "Frisco" train, which passed through Chandler, enroute to Kansas City. Lansing and the penitentiary were not far from there, reached by electric line. So, when Bill came through with his prisoners and one deputy for guard, it would be easy enough for the railroad men to seize their man at Sapulpa. The agent at Chandler would wire ahead when they started. The day was set. The train would pass through Chandler about noon.

But Bill learned of the plot. He could go on, prepared, take an extra deputy, perhaps. But he might have to shoot some of the mob. He knew he wasn't going to let them take his prisoner. There was a better way. Just after breakfast he entered the jail.

"Get the boys ready," he told Neal Brown. "We're taking the westbound train at ten o'clock." He telephoned to Oklahoma City to have two busses meet the train, making a transfer to the Santa Fe, which would also take them direct to Kansas City. At Sapulpa, a crowd of the "Frisco" railroad men waited, tense and determined. The train slowed to a stop, and the conductor, hanging from the first steps, waved his arm and shouted.

"It's no go, boys! The sheriff's took his prisoners and gone on the Santa Fe!"

The tense excitement subsided like a pricked balloon. Some laughed, a few cursed. Some perhaps were relieved as they recalled Bill's shooting. Just as well not to face that.

In the midst of his busy life, the sheriff found time for a brief courtship. Official business often took him into Payne county, adjoining Lincoln; and he timed his journeys for an overnight stop with my father, M. E. Stratton, who like himself, raised thoroughbred horses and Poland-China hogs. I was sometimes at home, sometimes away at the university. Bill was rather amazed to find that I understood thoroughbred pedigrees, a subject few men in the territory knew anything about, and which Bill himself had studied but little at that time. Soon we were exchanging letters. The university of Oklahoma was at Norman, also the seat of the insane asylum. It was the sheriff's duty to take inmates sent there, and we had brief visits on these occasions. At Christmas time, 1902, we were engaged, and were married on the following july 15 (*see plate* 4).

Reverend S. B. Buckner, minister and something of a politician, used to tell with delight of his meeting Bill waiting for the train at Guthrie, where the Stillwater branch line came in.

"Well sheriff," he said, "You after somebody again?"

Bill's eyes twinkled. "Yes," he said, "I'm going up in Payne county for a party I've been after two or three years." Three days later, reading the announcement of his marriage in the newspapers, Mr. Buckner understood his quiet joke.

We had planned a brief trip to Eureka Springs, the scene of his capture of Doolin, and an attractive summer resort. But Bill reported: "The 'Frisco' has just run an excursion, and everybody in Chandler is going over there." So by a last-minute change, we went to Kansas City instead, making several short side trips from there.

As we walked along one of the shabbier streets near the old Union station, a roughly dressed little man hopped off of the iron railing around a basement stairway, seizing Bill's hand with enthusiasm.

"Bill, how are ye?" he cried. "Well, well, ain't seen ye for a coon's age! And ain't it wonnerful, sissy, how he holds his age? Don't look a day older . . ."

This, to a bridegroom who had just married a wife considerably his junior, was at once complimentary and embarrassing. I managed to restrain my laughter, and Bill, with a few words of response, shook his hand and we passed on. "That's kind of one on me," he said ruefully, as we laughed together. He didn't introduce me and to this day I don't know the man's name, possibly a mere acquaintance who knew Bill better than Bill knew him. Bill had an excellent memory for names and faces, a part of his professional skill. But as he won distinction, he was known by sight to many with whom he never spoke more than a dozen words.

Court session was a busy time for the sheriff. Besides his official duties, friends from over the county would greet him and talk a little. Frequently he invited some of them to the house for dinner, for we kept an open hospitality such as we both knew from camp and range. Too, many of these people welcomed him over-night or for dinner as he rode over the county, scorning offers of pay. But amidst official and social duties, he could still give thought to others.

One evening he came to the kitchen door, followed by an elderly Negro couple, their poor clothes neat and clean, but faces darkly sorrowful. They had sat all day about court, waiting for their son's case to be called. At noon time they wandered out in the yard, but Bill, busy as he was, noticed that they didn't go to a restaurant. As court closed at five o'clock, he questioned them.

"You folks have not eaten today, have you? What's the matter?" They hadn't a cent, they admitted – not till their cotton came in. They'd had to put up a fee for a lawyer –

"You come with me," he said. So he brought them to the kitchen, where I was helping the cook dish up the prisoners' meal.

"Give these folks some dinner, Zoe," he said. Always through the years I have remembered this, and the pathetically grateful thanks of the two as they rose from the kitchen table after a good meal.

"God bless you, Missus, and the sheriff!" said the old man brokenly.

"Their son's charged by a Negro girl he's been going with," Bill explained to me that evening. "I think she's as guilty as he is, but is trying to lie out of it. But they'll probably send him up on her word."

Many other times he brought strangers and unfortunates to this back-door hospitality.

Negroes, of whom there were many in the county, were devoted to Bill. They were, traditionally, Republicans. But Sam Dabney was determined to vote for Bill. He was not very literate, and one of the Republican election officials offered to mark his ballot for him, promising to cast the vote for Bill. But the old fellow was taking no chances.

"No suh, I'll jest mark it for Mistuh Bill, no mind about the rest."

Early in his term of office Bill set up a new system in the collection of taxes, which later was adopted by law for the whole state, and saved the farmers thousands of dollars, besides much inconvenience.

The county treasurer issued warrants for delinquent taxes, requiring the sheriff to levy upon the tax-payers' property. Bill sent postal cards to these men, notifying them that he would be in the nearest town or at some school house, on a certain day, when they might meet him and pay up. Most of them did so. By this plan they were saved the long trip to the county seat, and the cash outlay of mileage. The sheriff was allowed by law to charge mileage from the county seat to each man's home, and return. If he made one trip to collect from two adjoining farms, he could charge up the whole distance for each one. By these meetings, he charged but one mileage, which made an appreciable saving. It also reduced the sheriff's compensation, a sacrifice of several thousand dollars.

"I can make enough money without that," he said. "It is a needless burden which, though legal, can be made a graft. When I go after a prisoner, I'll collect my mileage."

To Mexico

In february, 1905, a big official envelope arrived for Bill.

"I'm going to Mexico," he said, shoving the papers across the table to me. There was a commission, appointing William Tilghman special representative of the president of the United States; a letter addressed to Powell Clayton, United States minister to Mexico; and a request to the president of Mexico for extradition of one Fitzpatrick, a fugitive from justice, supposed to be in that country.

Bill frequently made trips to Washington in performance of his marshal's duties, and had met President McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. The latter, as a Montana rancher, knew of Bill's exploits at Dodge City. He was "delighted" to meet Mr. Tilghman, and soon it was "Bill."

When the "Frisco" railroad legal department sought to bring back their absconding paymaster, the president assented.

"Bill Tilghman's the man to send," he said.

Mexico, after fifty-five years of revolutions, had settled down to peace and advancement under Porfirio Diaz. It was a dictatorship. But at least warfare ceased, and the unhappy country had a chance to build again. It had now a line of railway to Mexico City, and some others in operation.

Trainmen and supervisors were mostly Americans, for as yet no Mexicans were trained to the work. Good wages and a spice of adventure attracted some. Many were hard and reckless men; or fugitives like Fitzpatrick. He had been a division paymaster, and the key man in a pay-roll padding that robbed the "Frisco" railroad of thousands of dollars.

It was a six-day journey by rail to Mexico City, though Bill had the best trains running. His long-unused New Mexican-Spanish proved useful. For the sign "English spoken here," was rare then. He called on the United States minister, Honorable Powell Clayton.

"You will have to present your extradition request in person," he said. "I will request an interview."

Conversations on the way down had convinced Bill that Fitzpatrick was not known to the trainmen along the main line. So, after calling on Mr. Clayton, he went casually sightseeing around the central railroad station, and the cafe where the men ate. He inquired about livestock and ranching, and the towns of the interior. He accosted a Mexican train porter, just arrived on his run, asking the way to a hotel; then about his work and his route. Presently he put the question he had not dared ask of the Americans:

"Did he know a Señor Fitzpatrick?"

"Sí, sí!" He was a conductor, on a train running beyond Aguascalientes, where this man's run ended. His description fitted. The place was six hundred miles into the interior.

"Gracias!" said Bill, slipping a silver dollar into his hand. It was worth two dollars Mexican. "And do not tell anyone I was asking about him."

"Assuredly not! A thousand thanks, *señor."*

On the next day, he drove with Mr. Clayton in the minister's carriage, to the presidential residence, the castle of Chapultepec. They entered a courtyard at the foot of the cliff on which the castle stands. An elevator carried them up, and a gold-laced colonel bowed them through the stately ante-chamber, into a smaller apartment. The president rose to greet them.

Porfirio Diaz was then in the prime of life, handsome of face, and of dignified, soldierly bearing. Though of part Indian blood, he inherited from his Spanish ancestry his tall figure and clear-cut features.

Bill was presented by the minister, and offered his request for extradition. He had learned, he said, that the man wanted was at Aguascalientes. "Don Porfirio" made no delay in the matter. It would be honored immediately.

"Colonel Alguierrez," he said, "you will arrange for a suitable number of *rurales* (National military police) to assist *Señor* Tilghman."

Bill thanked him but said that he would not need them. He proposed to go alone.

Colonel Alguierrez, in the ante-chamber, looked at him doubtfully. It would be most embarrassing if anything happened to the man with special commission from the great *Presidente* Roosevelt. The business held danger, he explained. These Americans were hard men. The presence of an officer looking for one would be known, and all would be against him.

Mr. Clayton, too, described the perils. An "accident" might so easily be arranged.

"I know you're right about that," returned Bill. "But a bunch of *rurales* would give me away at once. Some one would be sure to wire ahead that an officer was coming. If I can surprise him, there'll be no fight."

At Aguascalientes he took in the sights like any tourist; tried the baths from the natural hot springs, or "hot waters" after which the city was named. He purchased some of the beautiful native needlework for me. With a hired burro and a guide, he rode out to see the large *maguey* fields, and the men extracting *pulque*.

Also, on his return, he happened by the railroad station, when a certain train came in. The conductor who swung down was Fitzpatrick. When he left the station a few minutes later, Bill followed at a discreet distance. He had learned that this train crew remained here overnight. A train for Mexico City would leave in three hours.

Twenty minutes before train time, the ex-paymaster, lounging in his room with a cigar and a newspaper, looked up to find himself facing a pair of cool gray-blue eyes, and the barrel of a six-shooter.

"You're under arrest," Bill told him. "I have an order for your extradition honored by President Diaz."

He snapped handcuffs on the prisoner and returned his gun to its holster. "But," he warned, "I'm a pretty quick shot."

"I know you are," returned Fitzpatrick.

Bill's left hand on his prisoner's arm, his right hand free, they walked quickly to the station; the marshal looking warily at every shadowy doorway as they passed. It was near sunset, and a knife quickly thrown could upset the plan.

In fifteen minutes they were aboard the train, en route for the capital. Fitzpatrick, morose at first, began to talk.

"You'd never have taken me, or got away alive if I'd had half an hour's warning you were in town. The boys are all sworn to get any officer that comes snooping here. They'd have knocked you on the head on the station platform, or stuck a knife in your back."

Bill smiled grimly. "I knew that. So I just didn't give you the chance."

In Mexico City, Fitzpatrick elected to fight extradition and called an attorney, so he was lodged in jail. The proceeding would involve a delay of sixty days. Bill therefore came home. When he was notified that the extradition was affirmed, he went again for the prisoner.

This time, lest refusal might seem discourtesy, Bill accepted the escort of three *rurales* as far as the border. They sat in the seats adjoining, and he was able to take a nap whenever he felt sleepy. The little men, barefooted, with shabby uniforms, but efficient carbines, looked on him with immense respect. He was the friend of the great *presidente* of the United States. Every time he spoke to one, or if he walked past them going for a drink, they saluted.

They parted at the middle of the International bridge. Bill gave each of them $2.50, American, which brought a chorus of *"Gracias!"* Their pay was fifteen dollars a month Mexican, with not very liberal providing. They stood on the line at salute until his train passed off the bridge.

"Tilghman gets his man," ran the word again, when he delivered Fitzpatrick to the local authorities. It had cost him six thousand miles of travel, and no little danger.

A few weeks later, he again journeyed beyond the border, this time on semi-official business. The government of Mexico was at this period offering many inducements to American investors and settlers. The oil fields about Tampico had not yet been discovered, and real estate promotion companies were active in selling lands in the tropical coastal plain. The crops and production were as represented, but labor, social conditions, climate and illness, sent most of the settlers back to the United States in two or three years.

Bill, who had seen much of the interior, was charmed with the region where the mountains of the plateau fall away sharply to the coastal plain; rock gorges, shimmering waterfalls, and luxuriant tropical vegetation along the mountain sides. It was here, also that the real business of his trip led him.

J. B. Howard, a farmer in Lincoln county, had some personal troubles; a fight, a lawsuit, and then a charge of perjury against him. Before the trial, he sold his livestock and disappeared, with his wife and two daughters, aged ten and thirteen. The local bank, which held some mortgages, was concerned. They wanted settlement, but foreclosure on his land held legal difficulties. The charge against him was not serious enough to warrant extradition. They would defray expenses if Bill would find him and induce him to come back.

Before he went away, Howard had been led to believe that Bill was responsible for the filing of the perjury charge against him; though he knew nothing of it until the warrant was placed in his hands. Howard, out on bond, had waited in the corner of our yard, until one o'clock one night, for the purpose of shooting Bill. But Bill, that night, came by a short cut from the back.

Through a land company, Bill learned that one Saunders, a brother-in-law of Howard, had purchased a small ranch in the foothills west of Tampico. There, he guessed, he would find the Howards. At the nearest village he hired a mule and a guide.

He found his man sooner than he expected. Riding up a narrow mountain trail, he turned round a sharp cliff and came face to face with three men, Howard, Saunders, and another relative. All three carried shotguns. Bill had only his six-shooter. The first two would recognize him instantly. And they were, as he knew, not averse to shooting.

He faced them with an innocent smile. He was surprised—as indeed he was—at meeting them. A wonderful country here. How did they like it? They didn't admit being homesick; but news from Lincoln county was grateful to their ears. They shook hands and invited him to their ranch. Mrs. Howard and the girls were unfeignedly glad to see somebody from home.

In a long talk with Howard, Bill showed him that he would lose his land, and that it would be better to return and face his trouble. The perjury charge might not be proven. At any rate, it would not carry a very heavy sentence. Howard agreed, surrendered himself to Bill, and went back. But they delayed a few days to get ready, and Bill spent an interesting time riding the mountain trails with a Mexican guide, and shooting a deer and two peccaries.

Howard got out of his troubles, but in about a year was killed by Saunders in a jealous quarrel over his wife.

Bill made one more trip to Mexico, traveling for about two weeks, in company with his son Charles, who was at that time cashier of a bank at Chandler. They studied investment possibilities, but decided against it.

No Rusted Sword

Private Citizen

Bill Tilghman helped to establish a fair grounds at Chandler, as he had at Dodge City and at Guthrie. This was on a tract of thirty-five acres in the Bell Cow creek bottoms, just at the edge of town where the hill fell away sharply. It contained a few acres of fine woodland, besides the open ground where the half-mile track was built.

The Fair association, however, was poorly financed, and after several years it ceased operation. Bill bought the land, and moved all his horses there, selling his up-town stable. He sowed the space in and around the race track to alfalfa. Here, also, he kept his game chickens.

He declined to run for a third term as sheriff, and when his time was out, he engaged in buying and selling cattle and horses.

About eight months after our marriage, his daughter, Dot, was married to Dan Norton, a fine and able young man, who was clerk of the district court. Young Bill and Vonie were away at school much of the time. Our oldest boy was born september 26, 1905, and given the historic family name of Tench.

Bill was singularly devoted and indulgent to children. Even when the baby was very small he would hold and rock him; and play with him as he grew to notice things. Wherever he went, if there was a small child, it would soon be upon his knee.

In 1904, Bill was a delegate to the Democratic national convention at Baltimore, and later went to New York as a member of the official notification committee, to inform Alton Brooks Parker of his nomination for the presidency.

By this time, also, the statehood agitation was active in Oklahoma, and Bill took part in the meetings and conventions held in that cause. He was often called to serve on important committees. The statehood question was more complicated than in other states, for here were the twin territories, Oklahoma and the unorganized Indian territory.

The Indians did not want statehood, or any change at all. They also objected to being joined to Oklahoma territory. Many in Oklahoma did not want to join the Indian portion, although the whites living there outnumbered the Indians, two to one. There were many proposals: two states, one state; Oklahoma to be admitted at once and the Indian territory added gradually, as the older reservations had been. But by degrees opinion crystallized for single statehood, one state, embracing all.

Bill still held his marshal's commission and was called for occasional work.

William and Amanda had moved into town soon after Bill became sheriff. He had built for them a neat cottage, and Amanda, though frail, soon had the yard blooming and beautiful.

His sister Hattie had married a childhood friend, William Cox, and lived on her parents' farm. After a long illness, she died in 1905.

Amanda grew more frail and had to keep a woman to help her. At last they decided to give up housekeeping. Thereafter they lived with their son Frank at

Guthrie, with Josephine at Dodge City, or with us. They took particular delight in their youngest grandson, Richard Lloyd, born in 1907. In 1908, William died, aged 88. It lacked but a few days of their sixty-third wedding anniversary.

In the winter of 1906, Bill made a trip to Kentucky, where he purchased the stallion Gettysburg, a son of Hamburg. He had also several young thoroughbreds of his own raising, and he once more set up a racing stable. He was his own trainer.

This work was hampered in the summer by an attack of sciatica which kept him bed-fast for some weeks and dragged to a slow recovery.

In the spring of 1907 came a call from Henry Overholser and the progressive group of business men who were developing Oklahoma City from a crossroads town into the southwestern metropolis. Their goal – the capital of the state-to-be, for which they had worked since the first territorial legislature, was still in the uncertain future. But Oklahoma City, accessible by rail to all parts of the territory, was becoming more and more the business center. A state fair, these men decided, would enhance the prestige of their city.

"Send for Bill Tilghman," they said. So for the fourth time, Bill helped in the organization of a fair grounds, this time on a larger and more substantial scale than the local ventures. For many years, also, he served as one of the judges for the horse races.

He took his own racing string there for the first fair, and then on a circuit to Dallas and other southern tracks. He returned in time to attend the first state inaugural at Guthrie, when Charles N. Haskell became governor of Oklahoma.

Chitto Harjo

In the spring of 1909, headlines blazed and sensational newspapers rejoiced in reports of an Indian uprising, the Crazy Snake War. Two Chicago youths, having run away for the grand adventure of Indian fighting, were picked up on a train and sent home. The militia was called out.

Chitto Harjo, Crazy Snake, was never legally a chief, but was the leader of those Creek Indians who were against any changes. Some years earlier he had led an insurrection, setting up a "true Creek government," denouncing the existing chief and council for signing the allotment agreement. Several of the leaders were arrested by United States marshals, but were sent home on promise of good behavior.

The literal translation of Chitto Harjo's name does not give the true sense of it. "Chitto," snake, is the clan name, other clans being Bear, Tiger, and so on. "Harjo" means not ill-witted, but rather, crazily or recklessly brave.

Chitto Harjo was not present when the trouble arose. A number of his followers, mostly Creek-Negroes, were camped some miles from Henryetta, at the Hickory Stomp Ground, in cabins or shed shelters. Complaints were made of their raiding smoke houses, and officers went to the camp to arrest one man against whom charges were made. The Indians chased them out of camp and, of course claimed they had been set upon without cause. Another story is that having taken their man without any protest from the camp, the officers began a pretended search for stolen property, throwing into their wagon the Indians' best saddles or blankets, or anything of value. Whereupon the Indians drove them off.

As they did not know the names of the crowd at the camp, the officers swore out a warrant against Chitto Harjo. Three deputies went to his cabin. Only one came back. The town of Henryetta went wild. Men armed for defense, and wired the governor for militia. The two men killed had heroes' burial. Posses scoured the country. Harjo's cabin and those at the Stomp Ground were burned. One party killed an old Creek preacher driving along in his wagon.

Two companies of militia under command of Colonel Roy V. Hoffman–Brigadier General in France in 1918–encamped in military style. They put in two weeks traipsing around over the rocky blackjack hills and brushy bottoms. They could not find Crazy Snake, nor any hostile. This was no reflection on the militia. There weren't any "hostiles." And a man could lie hidden in that terrain when searchers passed within ten feet of him.

Colonel Hoffman's wife gleefully showed her friends a newspaper cartoon showing the colonel preparing to go to bed, his saber and spurs hung on the tent pole, while he bent his tall figure to peer under his army cot for Chitto Harjo.

The mercuric little governor twisted in his chair.

"Send a wire to Bill Tilghman," he said. "I want him right away."

Bill caught the train the next morning. Governor Haskell wasted no words.

"Bill," he said, "I'll give you a special commission, and I want you to go to Henryetta and try to find

Crazy Snake. There isn't any trouble over there"–the governor himself was from Muskogee, in the Creek country–"There's others more crazy than the old Indian. But we've got to arrest him. The militia are doing no good, and they're costing the state fifteen hundred dollars a day. You can do as much alone."

Bill spent four weeks at Henryetta, which by now had got over its scare. He searched through the rough country, stopped at many Indian cabins, and was well received, for his name was known and respected. But no one knew aught of Chitto Harjo.

Bill's report to the governor was not made public. It would only have made more trouble, and the old chief was gone. The story, as he pieced it together, and believed, was that the deputies had been drinking, and they opened fire as they approached Harjo's cabin. Three or perhaps four Indians were in the house, and they returned the fire. One was a fine marksman, and he killed two of the deputies. Chitto Harjo was severely wounded in the hip. Then the old man vanished. It was reported that he had escaped to Mexico.

In 1915, the rest was made known. A Choctaw, living across the Canadian river, had brought horses and helped the wounded man away that night. He was later slipped into the southeastern part of the state, in the remote Kiamichi mountains. Here he lived with another Choctaw till his death in 1911. Four years later this man told the story which was investigated and verified.

Chandler was growing. It had paving on the main streets, and voted bonds to build a sewer system and disposal plant. Bill was urged to run for the council and was elected in 1909. His colleagues chose him president. The position was one of much more honor than profit, a public service for which he was paid ten dollars a quarter. Regular meetings were monthly, with as many special meetings as they found needful, but no extra pay. This usually took one night a week. Besides this, Bill made daily trips to the site of the sewage plant, saving the city the cost of hiring an inspector. His work with railroad construction jobs had given him enough knowledge to perform this job. The plant gave good service for many years.

Business of the marshal's office took him to Washington in february, 1909, and he stayed for the inauguration of President William Howard Taft. President Roosevelt gave a special order to send Bill a card for the Army and Navy reception, the last of the brilliant functions of the Roosevelt administration. Invitation to this, for a civilian, was a signal honor.

On the morning of march 3, the president received a group of Oklahomans briefly, and Bill brought away an autographed photograph of the president.

The summer of 1909 Bill spent at home training a racing string of six horses. From the Oklahoma state fair in september, he went to Dallas, and thence to Juarez, Mexico. Here a great track was now in its second season. Bill spent the winter there with reasonable success. But the long absence from home irked him. He sold part of his string here, as he had several colts ready to put into training.

John Patton, who had a promising colt of his own, joined him. Patton was a younger man who knew no other life than that of the tracks. Bill did not go out with the stable again. Patton managed it through the next year. Early in 1913 he committed suicide because of personal troubles, and Bill, who was back in official work, sold the horses soon after.

Senator

Bill was scarcely home from Juarez in april, 1910, when he was plunged into a political campaign. The term of Governor Charles N. Haskell was expiring, and a lively contest for the nomination of his successor came on. William H. Murray, "Alfalfa Bill," teamed with Haskell. He had run things with a high hand in the constitutional convention and in the first legislature, of which Murray was speaker of the house. He had accepted that place for political expediency, in lieu of the governorship which he really wanted.

Haskell, it was agreed, would stand a better chance in a state-wide vote, while Murray could easily be elected in his home district. He would run for governor next time, for the constitution forbade a governor to succeed himself. With the support of the administration, well entrenched after four years in office, he expected to be elected. But in the meantime, the bond with Haskell was broken. There was no open quarrel, but a coldness; and the governor threw the administration influence to Lee Cruce.

Another candidate was J. B. A. Robertson, who had held his first office as county attorney when Bill was sheriff. Two years before, when Bill had done the governor a service, Mr. Haskell had said, "What can I do for you?"

"I don't need anything for myself," Bill answered, "but I'd like to see J. B. A. Robertson our district judge."

That office was vacant just then, to be filled by the governor's appointment, and Haskell made it forthwith. Judge Robertson made a favorable record on the bench. One day he said to Bill,

"I wish you were running for state senator from this district. It would help my campaign for governor a lot."

"Do you really think so?" asked Bill.

"Yes. More than anything else you could do."

"All right. I'll do it." And he went at once to file his name as a candidate.

Bill won handily in the primary, and was assured of election in november. In the governor's race, things did not go so well. With a divided field, it appeared that Bill Murray would have a majority. Governor Haskell and a few other party leaders held a conference and sent for Bill.

"We've got to combine on some one to beat Murray," they said. "And we figure Lee Cruce is our strongest man. You stand close to Robertson, and we want you to get him to withdraw. If Cruce is elected, he will throw the administration support to him next time."

Bill went over the situation carefully; saw the reports sent in by Haskell's men and Cruce supporters, and analyzed them with the dispassionate appraisal of political experience. Then he talked with Robertson.

"You're a young man, and have held no office to make you known over the state. You've a good chance to lose this time; but you can be building up, and win next time with administration help."

Bill Murray never knew of this agreement, but he felt the effects of it. And he fulminated with wrath against the "traitors and double-crossers" who made Lee Cruce the next governor.

This year, also, the long struggle over the state capital which had begun in the first days of the territory, came to its ending. Guthrie held the capital against the first legislative assault. Thereafter bills in congress forbade any action on the matter; and the Enabling act stipulated that the capital should remain at Guthrie until 1913.

Nevertheless the fight for its location raged. Oklahoma City, since the coming of the St. Louis and San Francisco railroad, giving it two main-line connections with St. Louis and Kansas City, had forged steadily ahead. And it possessed a remarkable group of aggressive business men and politicians who for seventeen years had worked steadily for this goal. They had refused the location of the university, offered them as a political sop. It went to Norman, eighteen miles south, which, with the then unforeseen coming of automobiles, became almost a suburb of "the city."

Muskogee would have liked the capital but was too near the eastern line of the state. Shawnee also hoped for it.

The question was submitted to the people at the primary election in june, with Guthrie, Oklahoma City, and Shawnee as candidates.

Everybody expected, however, that the capital would remain at Guthrie until 1913. Everybody, that is, but Governor Charles N. Haskell, who had helped to frame two state constitutions and was fairly expert in that line.

Bill had gone to Tulsa, after voting early at home. That evening he waited in the lobby of the Brady hotel, watching the election returns. Here too, appeared the governor, who had gone home to Muskogee to vote, and returned this far.

Figures were chalked up on a big board as they came in by wire and telephone, and the crowd in the lobby watched tensely. The governorship first: Cruce in the lead. Then the capital question; later, other races. Thirteenth district, senator, Tilghman ahead. Capital: Guthrie, Shawnee, Oklahoma City. The figures grew. "The city" was ahead; the lead increased.

The governor, dropping into a deep easy chair beside Bill smoked and watched the board with impassive face.

"Murray's piling up," remarked Bill.

"Lee Cruce will win. He'll get the northern counties, not in yet. But we doped it right, Bill. It's the Robertson vote that swings it."

Twelve o'clock. A new figure was chalked up for Oklahoma City, indicating a clear majority. Haskell tossed away his cigar. His lips set in a thin line.

"Come on!" he said. He walked over to the clerk's desk.

"How soon can I get a train to Oklahoma City?"

"Sorry, governor. The eleven-forty's gone. Next one is at four-twenty-five in the morning."

Mr. Haskell reached for the telephone. "Get me the division superintendent–This is Haskell. How soon can you have a special train ready to take me to Oklahoma City?–an hour?–All right."

He turned away with a smile, the light of battle in his eyes. "Get me Bill Cross, at Guthrie," he told the operator.

Bill mingled with the crowd, most of whom he knew, for few men in the state had such wide acquaintance. Presently the governor came over to where he stood with Tate Brady, sometime Democratic national committeeman for Oklahoma.

"I'm going to Oklahoma City. Want to come along? Special train in forty-five minutes. Anybody that wants to go!"

The one car of the special was filled with men and women. At sunrise, it pulled into Oklahoma City.

In the lobby of the Huckins hotel, Bill Cross, secretary of state, and W. B. Anthony, the governor's secretary, met them. Cross held a crooked package.

"Here you are, governor. We brought the seal! The Guthrie crowd got the judge out of bed to issue an injunction to prevent removal of any state property. And they were watching the railroad station. But we dodged them, and came down in an automobile."

An automobile! The words re-echoed over the state, as wires and press told the story. Forty miles of wagon roads, part of it through blackjack hills, and at night! It was an heroic, an epic feat. The first time that a car had made that trip.

It was six-thirty, and the dining-room doors opened. Men who had been up all night were ready for coffee and breakfast.

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Haskell. He walked to the desk, wrote briefly on a sheet of hotel paper. "Here," he said to Secretary Cross. "Put the state seal on that."

It was a proclamation declaring Oklahoma City the capital of the state, by vote of the people. They stuck it up on the wall near the clerk's desk.

"Now," said the governor, "let's go to breakfast."

So the feat of "stealing a capital" was accomplished. Presently a sign, "Governor's Office," appeared on the door of the hotel's best parlors. Leaders of Oklahoma City, haled from their beds, and yet dazed with the astounding news, hastened to welcome him.

At Guthrie, the men who had watched in vain, heard with stunned amazement, then fury, the message over the wires. The capital, the governor's office with the seal of state, were gone, the removal *un fait accompli.*

Amid the bustle and excitement and elation, men were welcoming Bill with "Congratulations, senator!"

The Guthrie people took the capital matter to court. Some flaw was found in the way the question was placed on the ballot, and the vote was therefore void. But the court also held that the legislature had the right to locate the capital; so they had an empty victory. The election came in november. On the fifteenth, the newly elected legislators were in office. The governor called a special session to meet november 28, for the purpose of locating the capital. It was a foregone conclusion that the legislature would carry out the expressed will of the people.

Much debate, however, arose over the selection of a site for the capitol building. The session lasted through december, with a week's adjournment at Christmas. The business was completed in the few days remaining before the date for the regular session. Oklahoma City had provided leased quarters for the legislature, and turned over the Irving school building to house the state offices.

Bill's long experience with laws and government and politics fitted him well for his senatorial duties. The special and regular sessions occupied nearly five months. One of the strong friendships made here was with Elmer Thomas, young senator from the western part of the state, Lawton. Mr. Thomas was chosen president *pro tem* of the senate. He remained a member for ten years, until he was elected to congress in 1922; and in 1926, United States senator.

But a legislative session entails long and tiresome work. Bill, like all the other members, was glad to see the end, and to get home. Spring work must be done about the place. Horses and game chickens required his personal attention. He was too near the soil to be willingly sundered from it.

Again The Chief — Oklahoma City

Another call soon came for official service. In the spring of 1911, Oklahoma City adopted the commission form of government. At the same time the large area south of the North Canadian river, hitherto a separate municipality named Capitol Hill, with early day hopefulness that it might some day be the site of the state house, now became part of Oklahoma City. A strong police department was needed, and the new commissioners asked Bill to be chief of police (*see plate* 7).

On the thirteenth of july he assumed his duties. The department had ninety-one men, including one Bertillon man, the first employed by the city. There was much to do in reorganization, and to take in the new area. There were, too, jealousies and antagonisms to be met.

But his fair administration soon made a loyal and devoted force.

"You don't have to make a lot of arrests to show you are efficient," he told the patrolmen. "I'll rate you higher if your beat is kept quiet and orderly *without* trouble."

Fifteen years afterward, and some time after Bill's death, I went into a little store in the less fashionable district to buy an old-time center table. It wasn't quite an antique yet. As I gave my name, to have it delivered, the owner called his assistant. Both were eager to talk. The former had served under Bill.

"He was the *only* police chief we've ever had here," he said.

Strikers picketed a restaurant, and there was a fight. The pickets were arrested, along with the other parties. The labor leader came in wrath.

"I'm here to keep the peace," Bill told him, "and if your pickets get into a fight in the streets, they'll be arrested every time. You can picket all you want to, and I'll protect them. But don't put on contentious men that will get in a row."

The union chief shook hands with him, and the picketing proceeded in peace.

The county attorney had boasted openly that he would "get" Tilghman in a short time. I chanced to be present in Bill's office when he came to call. He wished to talk about cooperation between the city and county authorities. Bill was suavely respectful and urbane. When he had bowed the visitor out, he turned to me with a smile.

"It was a pretty trap," he said, "but I didn't fall into it."

He saw to it that the police department gave full cooperation with the county. And in time, the hostile attorney was won over to friendship.

One man, however, he failed to win; an important man, for he was owner of the leading newspaper. While not making a direct fight against the police chief, his sheet managed to distort stories and play them up unfavorably. It was the subtle kind of attack that could not be met openly, so Bill ignored it and went ahead with his work.

The rest of this story came to me from his old friend

John Hale, after his death. Hale had dropped in to the police station one night, and was in Bill's private office when a man came in.

"I've got him now!" he cried. "I've been trailing him for six weeks, and got the goods on him at last. He is up in a room in a public house with a woman. And if you go there now you can arrest them together. You'll have a case he can't get away from."

"All right. Thanks. I'll attend to it," said Bill. As the man left, he turned to Mr. Hale. "Do you know whom he meant?"

"No."

Bill named the editor. "This man has it in for him. He's done him dirt, too."

"Well, he's done you enough! You have the chance to pay him back now. It's easy to raid the place and get him in the drag."

"Yes," returned Bill. "But I'm not going to. He's done me harm a-plenty. But he has a wife and little girl. They are the ones who'll suffer most. I can stand it."

Said John Hale: "That was just like Bill. Of all the years I knew him, that incident is one of the few that stand out most strongly in my memory."

There is no sequel to this episode. The paper continued its digs at the police chief. Neither the owner, nor his wife or daughter ever knew how he had spared them. In time the man's life went out in darkness. Nature, for his evil living, punished and spared not. But if the paper was hostile, heartening support came from many others, such as Charles Colcord, Bill's one-time assistant at Perry and now one of the big business men of Oklahoma City; Henry Overholser, its great builder; Mart Turner, one-time territorial treasurer, who had moved his bank from Guthrie; and John Hale, head of another bank.

Mayor Whit M. Grant received a letter from Judge J. C. Strang, former district and supreme court judge in Kansas, judge and territorial official in Oklahoma, and a leading Republican.

> I want to congratulate you on this appointment (Tilghman). There may be a better man in existence for this position than Bill, but if there is he is unknown to me. If I were mayor of your city and Bill would take the position, I would not consider anyone else for the place.
>
> I have known Bill Tilghman for more than twenty-five years. He will not bluster, but he will do things and do them in the right way. You and your city are entitled to congratulations.

We moved to Oklahoma City in july, soon after Bill became chief of police. He sold most of his stock, both on the farm and the place near town. Patton had the horses in training. It was left for me to dispose of household and other business matters. Bill had been too busy to find a house, but we soon rented one. In about two months, we bought the place which was our home thereafter. It was a new, six-room house, convenient and beautiful, and in a good location. Our oldest boy, Tench, started to school that fall. Most of the winter, Bill's mother and my father were with us.

Bill was not fond of society and parties, but he liked to have visitors, and was a genial and charming host. We gave occasional small dinners, and he frequently would bring someone home, phoning me if he had the chance, but often just walking in with them. This however, did not trouble me, for I had grown up on an Osage ranch, with the open-house tradition of the cow country. Bill, being well versed in kitchen affairs, would often bring something extra for the table at such times.

His exception in the matter of large parties was for the gatherings of the Eighty-Niners[30] twice a year, which he seldom missed. I found some university friends in the First Presbyterian church, where we were soon at home. Bill became a member about four years later.

He sold the farm at Chandler after moving to Oklahoma City, but refused several offers for the place near town. That, he said, was the natural park for Chandler, and he would keep it until they could buy it. After about five years, the town did buy it, at a lower price than Bill had refused. With its convenient location, trees and other natural advantages, the stables removed and a swimming pool and athletic field provided, it became an attractive park. The city council named it Tilghman Park.

Within six weeks of his induction as chief, Bill solved a major crime mystery which for nearly a year had been vexing officers over Oklahoma and in adjacent parts of Texas; a series of safe robberies. Three had occurred in Oklahoma City. The safes were opened without damage, and most officers held the theory that it was the work of a safe expert who could open the lock by listening to the click of the tumblers. But no suspect could be pinned.

Bill had another theory. All safes robbed, he noted, were made by the Mosler Safe company, whose branch in Oklahoma City was the distributing point for all the territory. They also would send out an expert if repairs or adjustments were needed. The robberies, Bill decided, were "inside jobs."

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[30] An organization of persons who made the run or settled in Oklahoma in 1889, their families and descendants.

He quietly investigated the personnel of the Mosler office. He learned, too, that a large book in which were recorded combinations of all safes sold or serviced, was missing. Here was pay dirt. Who knew of this book, and who could have taken it? The circle narrowed to three or four persons. One was their best safe man, a young fellow of good family, with a wife and child. Now came a report from another town of a new "expert" robbery.

"Cassidy," said Bill to his best plain clothes man, "you tail Hayes for the next few days. See who meets or talks with him."

Within a week he had his case. He knew something of the gang, learned that they planned to rob a certain grocery store. Bill warned the proprietor, gave him some marked money to place in his safe. That night, Bill himself stood in the shadow of some high church steps across the way. Eleven o'clock, twelve, one. A man strolled by casually; turned at the corner and came back. The lookout man! Presently another form slipped from the shadows by the store and joined the first; passed something to his hand. They separated and moved off. Johnny Cassidy and his companion drifted over from their hiding places.

"You take that one," said Bill. He himself followed the man who had been inside.

Straight to the alley back of Hayes's house he went and was admitted at the kitchen door. Half an hour later he came out. Bill, by the back gate, halted him.

"Hold on there!"

The man started, but with quick thought, threw his arms out, stretching and yawning as if just from sleep.

"What time is it?" he asked.

"It's time you walked down to the police station," snapped Bill as his gun flashed up. "March!"

Cassidy and his comrade already had the lookout man, with part of the marked money. Bill's captive proved to be a brother-in-law of Hayes, a young fellow with no visible means of support. He likewise had one-third of the marked money, and a slip of paper which he tried to destroy. Bill seized it; the combination of the safe, and as it proved, in the handwriting of Hayes.

It was daylight now, and consigning the two to jail, Bill and the detectives hurried to Hayes's home. He too, had one-third of the marked money; and in a closet, beneath a pile of blankets, Bill found the missing record book, containing the combinations of more than three hundred safes.

Their system was simple. His two confederates would "case" a place, plan entrance and get-away. Then Hayes would give them the combination, and they would loot the safe quickly and easily.

But once they had slipped. A watchman hailed them as they were leaving a place in Shawnee. They shot and killed him. Now Shawnee officers claimed them on the charge of murder. Hayes stayed in jail for some time. However, the Mosler Safe company refused to prosecute.

"You can holler to high heaven for the police to 'do something'" Bill told the manager, scornfully. "But when we do get your thieves, in a cinch case, you refuse to back us up! How do you expect law enforcement?"

The case was kept out of the Oklahoma City newspapers, except for the briefest notice. Since the other men were not being tried in Oklahoma county the matter was soon forgotten. And few persons realized Bill's coup in forestalling nearly three hundred robberies.

Dark Side and Light

On a bitter cold sunday in january 1912, came word of the murder of T. J. Gentry, proprietor of one of the largest cleaning and dyeing establishments in the city. He had been shot through the head, from behind, as he sat in a chair before the fire. Within twenty-four hours Bill had arrested his wife, her brother, Maurice Weightman and her lover, T. J. Mackey; found evidence to break up their prepared alibi, and had a confession.

The three had tried to kill Gentry before, by means of poison in a bottle of milk, but he failed to drink it. Then they decided on shooting. Mrs. Gentry got his own gun, and the two men drew straws to see which should shoot him. The lot fell on the brother. Facing Bill's searching blue-gray eye and quiet questioning, young Weightman fainted outright. The incident impressed Bill, being something new in his wide experience of human nature and criminals.

"How could he have the nerve to commit such a cold-blooded murder, and yet collapse at the mere questioning?" he said.

Mrs. Gentry was given a life sentence, her brother ten years, and Mackey as state's evidence went free, and disappeared.

The city at that time had no regular welfare and charity organization, and much of this type of work fell to the police. One of the few times Bill appeared as speech maker was at the dedication of a citadel of the Volunteers of America. Horses were still the chief motive power, and Bill saw that the police maintained the humane ordinances.

His kindnesses to women and children were without number, and set the tone for the department. One cold evening a patrolman brought in a five-year-old newsboy, crying with cold and hunger and fear of going home to a licking because he had not sold his papers. Seated on Bill's knee, he told his story, which the patrolman could largely confirm. His troubles for that day were over. Bill detailed a uniformed man to take him out for a good meal, then escort him home, with a sharp warning from the chief that there should be no more lickings for unsold papers.

Several times, Bill brought some one home. Once three girls, abandoned by their parents, had been put on a train and shipped here. These we kept for two weeks, until places could be found for them. They were clean and well-behaved, and helped with the housework.

Gertie was a Texas small town girl, engaged at sixteen to Kelly, a railroad man. He took her on an excursion, and proposed that they should tell her parents on their return, that they had been married. No other ceremony was necessary, he told her, and she believed him. So they announced their marriage, rented a house and bought furniture. They lived agreeably for four years, and a boy was born, now past two years old. Kelly took her to visit his parents, as his wife.

Then Kelly came to Oklahoma City, where he found another woman attractive. He sent for his wife and child but continued his attentions to the other woman.

A fellow lodger at their boarding house discovered that Mrs. Kelly, nineteen and pretty and lonely, was in a temper to pay her husband back. They went to a show together, whereupon Kelly used his fists on the young man, and had them both arrested. The police however failed to find any "disorderly conduct." They were released.

Kelly then, in order to make a case against them, told the story of the pretended marriage. Bill eyed him coldly.

"If she's not your wife," he said, "she's perfectly free to go with this other man, and you've nothing to say about it. It's you who are guilty of disorderly conduct."

He questioned Gertie, who told the same story of their marriage. She had not doubted until that moment that it was legal; and in many states it would have stood as binding.

Released from jail she was without a penny, so Bill brought her home. Kelly had gone, taking the child to his mother. She could get money from her parents, she said, as soon as a letter could get around. And she could work to support herself.

Her father sent money and she went at once to bring back her child. Kelly had work on the railroad but was in Oklahoma City about once a week. He now sought a reconciliation. Gertie had enough of him; but there was the baby to consider. At length she agreed to marry him and the ceremony took place in Bill's office. Kelly said he would come for her at the end of his next run. But she waited not an hour longer than the time set. She packed her clothes, cooked our dinner, leaving it on the stove, and when Bill drove home, she was ready for him to drive her to the train. She had a sister in

Kansas City who would care for the child while she worked. Bill paid her wages for the time she had been with us.

"I'll never forget," she said, her voice breaking as she held my hand. "I'd have lost my baby and everything but for Mr. Tilghman."

But there were lighter interludes at the police station. Things were a little slack one evening when Bill called the captain on duty.

"They're playing hell over at one-twenty-two West Main," he said. This was just around the block from the police station. The captain called a man and went in haste. The number proved to be that of one of the best picture houses at that time, although it was a large remodeled store building. But there was no sign of disturbance and the doorman said no call had been sent in.

"The chief must have got the number wrong," said the two. "Maybe it was two-twenty-two."

So they searched the next block, finding only shops closed for the night and all peaceful. They went back to the station.

"Chief," said the captain. "There must have been a mistake about that call. Wrong number maybe."

"Oh, I guess not," answered Bill. "How's the show?" He kept a sober face, but there was a quizzical twinkle in his eye that they knew.

"Show?" said the captain, puzzled. "What about the show? . . . Oh–!"

He slapped his thigh and roared. "Playing hell!" he repeated. Bill's word was right, for the picture showing was Dante's "Inferno."

Having enjoyed the laugh on themselves, the two were ready to pass it on. A motorcycle patrolman came in just them. "The chief wants you," they said. Bill gave him the same word, and he went on a run to his machine, pop-popped around the block twice and came back to report "nothing." He decried the "fool operator" who took the call.

"Why they *are* playing hell, aren't they?" said Bill, innocently. Before the evening was over, about every free man on duty had been sent to hell, and was buying cigars for the preceding victims.

His Great Ambition

Next to his official work and his horses, perhaps, Bill loved politics; not seeking position for himself, but as a student, watching with detached and impersonal vision. When he did take active part, it was a means and not an end. He knew its ways and methods. Bill himself was a Democrat, and always a party worker. He was intimate with political leaders of both parties through the territorial days. His connection with the marshal's office threw him in contact with many of them. The Republican office-holders and the small number of local leaders, were divided into bitter factions. Yet Bill was the trusted friend of both groups.

Bill naturally followed national politics. He had attended most of the Democratic national conventions, and was a delegate in 1904. In private life, he still followed political news, and would often make pointed inferences, or read between the lines for trends which the average reader would miss. I learned from him the same attitude, and politics was a matter of household conversation with us. Several times, I visited sessions of the senate when he was a member. After we moved to Oklahoma City, he took me with him to the capitol, where I met his friends and learned my way about.

Bill had one great political desire. As deputy United States marshal, he had served longer than anyone else in the area, and had done more active field service and dangerous work. If there were promotion, he had earned it. To drop off the "deputy," to be United States marshal in full rank, this was his heart's ambition; to crown his long official service for both government and state.

The marshalship, however, was political patronage, often given to a man who had never seen an official paper or done an official act. It was the reward of political service and friendship, or of jobbery.

The long tenure of the Republicans therefore gave Bill no chance for the coveted honor.

In spite of the deals which were part of political operation, there was yet a code of honor which few men cared to violate. This code of honor played a determining part in Oklahoma's first election. United States senators then were chosen by the legislature. But the Democrats, sponsoring the primary nominating system, were pledged to validate the people's choice.

There still remained some of the jealousy between the East side, the old Indian territory, and the West side, the territory of Oklahoma. Therefore the Democratic leaders announced a "gentleman's agreement," that whatever the result of the primary, each part should have one of the two United States senators. The three high men were Robert L. Owen, Judge Henry M. Furman, and Thomas Pryor Gore. The first two were residents of the Indian territory, Gore of the West side. Keeping the agreement, Judge Furman withdrew, and the legislature duly elected Owen and Gore as the first senators from Oklahoma. The marshalship was the political patronage of the senators.

As the Taft administration drew to a close, came the break in the long-dominant Republican party. The liberals organized, and with Theodore Roosevelt their candidate, the Bull Moose their emblem and popular name, they sought to seize the power. During the campaign Mr. Roosevelt came to Oklahoma, making a speech at the state fair. Bill, as judge of the races, welcomed him at the judges' stand. It was their last personal meeting.

The stand-pat Republicans made President Taft their candidate. And in the three-way election, the Democrats triumphed with the election of Woodrow Wilson.

In the spring of 1912, the election year, Senator Gore paid a visit to Oklahoma. Bill chanced to be out of town for the two days he was at Oklahoma City. Therefore Senator Gore left word with Charles West, first attorney general of Oklahoma.

"Tell Bill," he said, "that I wanted to see him. And say that if Wilson is elected president, I will name Bill United States marshal."

During its territorial days, Oklahoma had been largely dependent on the aid of congressmen from the adjoining states, and now the support of Oklahoma was conceded to Honorable Champ Clark, of Missouri. Mr. Clark, however, had not performed any particular service for the territory, and many Democrats favored Woodrow Wilson as a more liberal candidate. Bill was among this group, and had already been working for Mr. Wilson. Gore's offer, therefore was doubly welcome, and he threw all his efforts into the campaign.

The police department gave him whole-hearted aid. Through letters and personal work, he lined up many of his wide acquaintance over the state, and in Lincoln county. Oklahoma county with the largest population, would have most votes in the convention.

On the eve of the county convention, however, the results were doubtful. Checking over the delegates, the Clark forces apparently had the best of it.

"Where's Crutcho township?" Bill asked as he studied the reports, with Enoch Capshaw, a county "wheel horse."

"They didn't hold a meeting. I got the word from Dave Smith late today."

Crutcho township is an area six miles square, lying east of Oklahoma City. Good roads were hardly dreamed of at that time, and automobiles usually stayed in town. Many of the small streams and gullies in Crutcho had no bridges, and steep banks that wagons could manage were impossible for cars. Nevertheless Bill, with Mr. Capshaw, engaged a car and a chauffeur and set out. They reached the home of their first Democrat about ten o'clock P.M. He, like all the farm people, was in bed. They roused him, and after a brief consultation he saddled a horse to go after some men, while Bill and Capshaw went for the men on the passable roads.

By midnight the number necessary for a quorum had assembled at the country schoolhouse. The meeting was formally called and three delegates to the county convention were elected. At three o'clock Bill reached home for a few hours sleep.

Next day a bitter battle raged. The Clark forces were marshalled. It was all or nothing. The delegation would be a unit for one candidate. Parleys before the meeting; parliamentary shifts and tactics; speeches and motions rolled through the long day. In the end the thirty-eight delegates of Oklahoma county were instructed for Wilson–by a two-vote majority. The three votes from Crutcho township had turned defeat into victory.

An even fiercer struggle ensued in the state convention. At last the delegation to the national convention was instructed to vote half for Wilson and half for

Clark. As Oklahoma had been conceded to Clark, the Wilson headquarters had spent no campaign funds nor particular effort here. Those who knew, agreed in giving Bill a major share in the results. The votes of Crutcho township and of Oklahoma county, which he had swung, were in each case decisive.

The national convention at Baltimore proved one of the longest on record. Vote after vote was taken. A gasp of astonishment went up when at last, the entire ballot of Oklahoma was cast for Wilson. The other half of the delegation had come into line, and this was the beginning of the swing which broke the deadlock and resulted in the nomination of Woodrow Wilson, on the forty-sixth ballot.

After the election in november, Senator Gore again visited Oklahoma. He congratulated Bill on his work which had carried the state for Wilson, and renewed his promise of the marshalship.

In october, two weeks before the election, our third boy was born, whom Bill named Woodrow Wilson. In february, 1913, Bill resigned his position as chief of police of Oklahoma City. The long hours which he had put in at the office had told on him. He was ill, and became worse. For a time, however, he kept going, though under a doctor's care, and devoted himself to preparing his application for the marshalship. Party support and endorsement was expected, although the senator would recommend a name to the president, who would make the appointment.

The Double-Cross

Nearly three hundred endorsements were in the book which Bill took to Washington. They comprised letters from every member of the state supreme court and the supreme court commission, and many other judges over the state; more than a majority of both the state senate and house of representatives; most of the state officers; ex-United States attorneys and marshals with whom he had served; two former presidents of the Farmer's union; chairman of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; officers of the Young Men's Democratic league; campaign committees and Wilson-Marshall clubs; Lincoln county Sunday school association; unanimous endorsement of the Lincoln county delegation to the state Democratic convention; editors, bankers, sheriffs; one hundred leading business men; police and fire departments; Oklahoma county Bar association; department commander of the United Spanish War veterans; and two members of the national Democratic committee.

Robert Galbreath, Democratic national committeeman, endorsed him, and Tate Brady, one-time holder of the same position, wired:

"Bill, I am for you, first, last, and all the time."

Joe B. Thompson, member of congress and former colleague in the state senate, wrote: "Anything I can do for you, Bill." George Neeley, member of congress from the Seventh district of Kansas wrote a letter of endorsement.

Many of these letters mentioned long acquaintance—fifteen, twenty-five, thirty-five years.

Caleb R. Brooks, United States attorney during the Cleveland administration, and a leading lawyer wrote: "I am proud and pleased to ask the appointment for this man, knowing him as I do."

Republican endorsements were not wanting: Horace Speed, for ten years United States attorney, and associated with Bill in the prosecution of the mob which burned the two Indians, as well as many other important cases, wrote strongly.

Honorable John H. Burford, for fourteen years judge and most of that time chief justice of the territorial supreme court, and at this time a state senator, said:

> I have personally known Mr. Tilghman for twenty years. He was for many years a deputy marshal in Oklahoma, and for four years sheriff of one of the counties in which I had the honor to be presiding judge. No better, braver, truer, more discreet officer ever wore the star. He is affable, courteous and genteel to his superiors or associates, and kind and generous to the unfortunate.
>
> I am a Republican and speak disinterestedly. I assure you that no appointment you can make will be more fitting or appropriate, or more creditable to your administration than the appointment of Mr. Tilghman.

D. P. Marum, lawyer and one-time official of the land office at Woodward, pointed out: "He remained true to Democracy when he who did so in this region had to cast aside any hope of political advancement."

Dennis Flynn, also Republican and delegate to congress for Oklahoma during most of the territorial days, wrote:

> I have known Mr. Tilghman for twenty-five years. In my judgment there is no more competent man for the position to be found, in this state or elsewhere. He is honorable and trustworthy; has had years of experience; is in sympathy with you and your administration, which he helped.

Another associate, Frank Bebee, recalled:

> For many years I was connected with the United States postal service, as post office inspector, Oklahoma being my state assignment.
>
> I don't believe I ever met a better officer in any district in the United States, than William Tilghman, and I have had occasion to know the efficiency of men in many districts of our country.
>
> I can vouch for his courageous performance of duty under all circumstances, his high character, and his integrity. I don't think there is a man in the state who can say that Bill Tilghman ever went back on his word or violated an obligation.

One of the most notable men in the state, John Fields, editor, agricultural expert, and several times Republican candidate for governor wrote a strong endorsement. Later Mr. Fields was president of the United States Land bank at Wichita and then the Federal Reserve bank.

From Bartlesville, in the Eastern district, wrote William Higgins, also a Republican:

> I desire to endorse him and hope you may see your way clear to name him. I have not been asked by him or any friend of his to give my endorsement. I write you in his interest because I have known William Tilghman for the past twenty-seven years and more, as a citizen, a Democrat and an official, when he was serving

> as chief of police and deputy sheriff at Dodge City, Kansas, and he made good. There never was a more honest, fearless and creditable public servant commissioned in any state; and while I had charge of the special service department of the Santa Fe railroad system west of Chicago, from 1885 until 1888, I had ample opportunity to know and judge of his honesty, efficiency, and loyalty to his party and good government.

Of other Democrats there was Charles Barrett, senator, and later, for twenty years adjutant-general of the state. He wrote:

> I have been urged to endorse the candidacy of other gentlemen for this place; but I consider the qualifications of Bill Tilghman are so pre-eminent and superior, that I should be untrue to myself and the people I represent if I did not turn aside from the pleadings of personal friends to endorse him.

W. B. Anthony, ex-speaker of the house, emphasized that:

> In all of his official career and private life, there has never been a single word of reproach upon either his individual reputation or his official record.

The railroads and express companies had been principal victims of outlawry, and they were interested: J. R. Cottingham, head of the legal department of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe for Oklahoma, recounted some of Bill's services, and added:

> If years of service, ability to perform the work, and unswerving fealty to the Democratic party would entitle him to consideration, I am sure that his appointment would reflect credit on your administration, and would give to the railway and express companies a sense of security and protection.

Fred Bonfils, owner and editor of the powerful

Denver Post and friend of Bill's since the early days at Guthrie, wrote a strong endorsement to Washington.

There were several other candidates for the marshalship, but none of them with official experience, nor, according to political rules, of comparable record as party workers.

Bill went to Washington for Mr. Wilson's inauguration, and Senator Gore again assured him of the appointment; but pointed out that the business was not likely to come up for some months. News dispatches from Washington named Bill as the chosen marshal for the Western district.

Meantime Senator Gore, who would come up for re-election the next year, had become involved in a scandal. A Mrs. Minnie Bond had filed a suit against him charging an attempt at a criminal attack upon her.

Bill's illness grew worse after his return from Washington, and when he at last was better, the doctors advised rest, and a trip to the mountains. We had an automobile by this time, and roads had improved. We spent six weeks in Colorado, stopping for a few days' visit with his sister Josie and her family at Dodge City.

Many other Oklahomans were in the mountains, and presently political gossip whispered that Bill might be named as registrar of the land office at Guthrie. This was a clerical job, entirely out of line with Bill's taste or experience. Once a lucrative position, it now was worth less than one thousand dollars a year. The marshalship paid five thousand dollars.

These rumors were disquieting; but on our return to Oklahoma, John Young, law partner of Senator Gore at Lawton, brought Bill a message: "Sit steady in the boat. Everything will be all right when the time comes."

Gore himself came back in october, to view his political fences, and to consult with his defense lawyers for the approaching criminal trial. He met Bill and Honorable D. B. Welty, Democratic state committeeman, in the hotel.

"Bill," he appealed, "I'm in a hell of a fix over this Mrs. Bond trial, and I need all the help I can get. The Haskell bunch want the marshalship, to line up for me next year. Now everyone knows your claim on it. You have by far the strongest endorsements and can probably block the appointment. But if you will lie quiet and not protest, I pledge you my word for an equal position."

Bill saw the hopes of twenty years fading. Gore held the patronage, and if he tried to block the senator's recommendation, he would lose all chances. Better then, to take what he could get.

Gore went on to explain that appointments in the territories became senatorial patronage, since they had no senators of their own. Gore had filed a claim, he said, on the marshalship of the Canal Zone. He had told the president that he wished to present the name of William Tilghman; had described Bill's qualifications and political services. President Wilson had expressed his approval, and the appointment would be made in january, following.

"You have the word of the president," he told Bill and Mr. Welty.

Gore's choice for the marshalship was Dr. J. Q. Newell, a physician, but not practicing. He had been in the state senate with Bill, serving one term. In 1912, when Charles N. Haskell, the first governor, sought the senatorial nomination against Robert L. Owen, Newell had aided his campaign. In return for this, Mr. Haskell wished to see him "taken care of." Gore also made a deal with Judge Robert L. Williams who agreed to use his influence for Gore, on condition that Williams's man, Duke Stallings, be made chief deputy marshal. This was done and Stallings served two terms in that position. Williams and Haskell, men of honor, faithfully carried out their part of the bargains.

How sincere Gore was in his statements, whether he really intended to perform his promises, or whether he was deliberately lying, can never be known. But after his voluntary, unsolicited promise, seeking Bill in the first place; the promise often reiterated; securing for himself the prestige of a successful Wilson campaign in Oklahoma through Bill's work, Gore's return was political dishonor and treachery – the double cross.

Bill's appointment was not forthcoming in january, but Gore had soothing syrup when he came back to face his trial in the Bond suit. The president, he said, had just appointed Major-General George W. Goethals governor of the Canal Zone. Goethals, builder of the Panama canal, was paid fifteen thousand dollars a year as chief engineer. The governorship paid only ten thousand dollars. He agreed to accept it under certain conditions, one being that he should name all the federal appointees. Thus, said Gore, he was unable to deliver the promised position to Bill. But certainly he would obtain another equally good. On march 22 he wrote from Washington:

> I found the situation pretty much as we expected touching the Panama appointment. I have, however, another plan on foot which

> is more promising than that. Am hoping to have something definite to write you soon.

On april 2 he wrote again of "an appointment that will take your breath away."

A few days later came a letter forwarded by Gore, the answer to one written by him to General Goethals. It said there was no place available in Panama. It may be that Gore's late assurance to Bill had been based on this thin possibility.

The trial of Senator Gore consisted largely in dirt slinging by both sides, the reputations of both Senator Gore and Mrs. Bond being pretty well plastered with mud. Her charges were never successfully disproved, but because of the testimony against her general character she was denied damages; thus Gore was whitewashed; "entirely exonerated," as he claimed.

In the primary that summer, he won the nomination by a small majority of votes, over Samuel W. Hayes; and accordingly was re-elected to the senate in november.

In the fall of 1917, one John Couch, who was already under bond for sending threatening letters to his wife and her sister, Nellie Smith, walked into the school room where the latter taught, at recess time, and shot her dead. He then drove to the downtown district, less than half a block from the marshal's office, and likewise shot down Roland Williams, a voice teacher, from whom Miss Smith was taking lessons, and of whom he was jealous.

A short time before this, his wife, Mary Couch, long a principal in one of the city schools, had written a letter to the marshal, stating their fear of Couch and asking that he take steps to protect them. The marshal admitted receiving the letter, but he neglected to do anything, and the double murder followed.

When President Wilson was re-elected and federal appointments were again made, Bill once more sought the office. But this time he made no public campaign. It was customary to reappoint officers who had made good records and men had been summarily removed for smaller matters than criminal negligence which cost two lives. However Mr. Graham, the assistant attorney-general, had become quite friendly with Dr. Newell. He did not consider the angle of official negligence important, he said. The two people were dead, so why make a fuss about it? Newell therefore was given another four year term, after which the Republicans again came into power.

Politics and Pictures

While the marshalship affair dragged on, people of the Southwest watched especially the increasing troubles along the Mexican border. There was talk of war. Bill and Fred Sutton considered raising a company of Oklahoma scouts and sharp-shooters, similar to the Rough Riders, and many men were eager to join. Thirty-nine men quickly offered to enlist. They included many police officers who had served under Bill, two of the city commissioners, judges, and prominent business men.

This spring, also, Bill undertook a trip to Mexico for several business men who thought they might gain some interest there. From Brownsville, he crossed to Matamoros, and conferred with General Blanco who was operating in that sector. Bill wrote home:

> I had a long talk with General Blanco. He is a very intelligent man, and I would judge him to be a good man. His army is a poverty-stricken looking bunch. They are poorly equipped for war. Their horses are poor, and consist of a very poor class of mustang ponies. If it came to a fight, they could not make much of a battle with the arms they have, and could not make a decent retreat with their mounts.
>
> Blanco says he is battling for the rights of his people, and would soon whip the *Federalistas* if he were permitted to transport arms and ammunition from the United States. Blanco was very much elated over an article in the *Houston Chronicle* which quoted President Wilson as saying that he could see no prospect of holding constitutional elections at this time.

Bill added some pertinent commentary of his own:

> Bill Murray said in a speech in Oklahoma City the night before I left that he and the president had different views in regard to the Mexico situation. That he was in favor of intervention; that if he had the power to do so, he would surround the border with the U.S. Army, take charge of all the custom houses; send our war vessels to the coasts and capture all the custom houses there; then march into the interior with our soldiers and take the City of Mexico. And in thirty days the troubles in Mexico would be ended, probably without a shot fired.
>
> He failed to tell the people what he would do with the ten million paupers in Mexico, most of whom never looked in a book or had a shoe on their feet; and the outlaw bands in the mountains that we could not subdue with all the U.S. Army for years to come.

After his return from Mexico, Bill worked actively in the campaign office of his friend, J. B. A. Robertson, who was seeking the governorship. The primary was one of the hottest ever waged in Oklahoma, with a number of candidates, and much mud-slinging and vituperation.

Al Jennings, who had obtained a matchless notoriety through *The Saturday Evening Post,* furnished a large part of this. Using a few facts from Jenning's career, Will Irwin had written a thriller under the title of "Beating Back." It featured Jennings's conviction for train robbery, and was represented as "every word true." It contained such weird "facts" as the finding of a puff-ball by the roadside in *january,* and by it, the healing of his ankle shot through by a bullet from a Winchester, so that four days later the hero walked a long railroad bridge to try a train robbery. Such falsities as the government's offering a reward for the capture of whiskey sellers in the Indian territory. Such discrepancies as, "We would scatter, after making an appointment for another robbery, often for months ahead"; and, "We never robbed a train unless we had a tip on a large shipment of money."

In spite of such a prophetic gift that could foretell the date and train of a shipment "months ahead," the bandits came to grief after an actual career of four months.

But the book and the moving picture made from it afforded Jennings invaluable publicity. The burden of his campaign speeches was, "You know the worst of me. I have reformed. The other candidates are just as bad, but they have never been exposed." This type of appeal, a boast of his "honesty" and a deal of mud-slinging and innuendo, was aided by his real ability as a platform speaker. It attracted that class of voters who are always susceptible to demagogic methods, and he polled a large vote, though he did not attain even second place.

The result was close, and it was at first indicated that Robertson was the high man. Final returns showed otherwise. Bryan, the home county of Judge Robert L. Williams, reported more Democratic votes in the primary than the entire vote of the county in the previous election. It seemed to indicate a large increase of population. But strangely, by the time of the next election, most of these voters had vanished.

Judge Robertson was again a candidate in 1918, and was elected.

The campaign over, Bill drifted into an unexpected line of business. The Irwin-Jennings story and film, "Beating Back," had lionized the criminal and showed the officers as mean, contemptible and cowardly. Officers and lawyers who had generously helped Jennings for a reduction of his sentence, and to establish himself in practice after his return, were indignant.

"Somebody ought to make a picture showing the truth," they said. Former Marshal E. D. Nix, then living in St. Louis, was a promoter. He liked the idea and agreed to finance it. Bill, it was planned, should be in actual charge. The motion picture business at that time had not been concentrated in control of the big companies.

Bill already had a slight experience. Several years before, in the summer of 1908, he had been director for a film, although not financially interested. John Abernathy, a Texas cowboy, had developed a particular stunt of catching wolves alive, with his hands. When President Theodore Roosevelt attended the Rough Riders reunion at San Antonio, and stopped in "The Big Pasture"[31] for several days hunt, Abernathy's performance was an interesting feature of the trip. The president greatly admired it, and told about it on his return to Washington.

"A man catching live wolves with his hands!" Nobody would contradict the president, if he wanted to tell a good story. But they couldn't hide the polite, incredulous smiles. That irked him. "I'd like to have pictures, to show them," he remarked.

A few months later, he appointed Abernathy United States marshal for the Western district. So, in the summer of 1908, Abernathy planned to make such pictures. With Chris Madsen, still the invaluable office deputy, and several other associates, he assembled a party, camping outfit, horses and dogs, and a photographer who owned a moving-picture camera. Abernathy's young wife, and families of the others went along for a vacation in the Wichita mountains.

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[31] Area reserved as pasture lands for the Indians when the Kiowa-Comanche country was opened in 1901.

They spent nearly two weeks, but made no progress with the picture. And again, consulting together, they said "Send for Bill Tilghman." Bill received the wire at Chandler, and, supposing it to be a call for marshal work, he took the train for Lawton. They met him and took him out to the camp.

"Why, I don't know anything about moving pictures!" he protested.

"You know how to get things done," was the reply. "We've got to have somebody for a director, and we'll put you in full charge and do what you say."

J. B. Kent, the photographer, was a resident of Chandler, and a long-time friend of Bill's. He knew as much of his art as any man of that time. They talked it over.

"Just catching the wolf isn't enough. We ought to have some sort of a story," they agreed. Accordingly a scenario was worked out which compared well with the average short film of that day. Bill visited his friend Quanah Parker, the Comanche chief, whose home was at the edge of the Wichita mountains, then a national forest. Quanah promised to aid them. Heck Thomas was chief of police at Lawton. He would help. And Al Jennings, then living in that city, was eager to get in.

The film as finally worked out included a holdup of the bank at the little town of Cache, by Al Jennings and his gang. This was staged just at the close of business, by agreement with the banker. But a citizen who was present, and not "in the know" jumped out the window and ran to give the alarm, adding a bit of excitement that was entirely real. The officers, led by

Bill and Heck Thomas, pursued, taking in some of the most picturesque scenery of the Wichitas. They met the Indians, and after some sign talk between Bill and Chief Quanah, the latter joined them as guide and trailer. The bandits were of course caught after a proper battle.

For the wolf catching, they had much difficulty. The dogs could jump a coyote or lobo in an hour. And Abernathy could catch it. But never before the camera. They had only the one machine which must be set precisely on a tripod. There was no fence to confine the animals, such as studios use today.

At last, Bill stretched a length of telephone wire across a pretty spot on Medicine creek, and to this fastened a big lobo, with a wire about his neck, several feet long. The wires were invisible in the picture. Mr. Kent took shots of the dogs and wolf running; then set up his camera for the best view at the creek. Here the wolf was seen, moving restlessly on a big rock in the middle, and apparently hesitant about stepping into the water. The dogs came in with Mr. Abernathy close upon them, and he leaped off into the water a little more than knee deep, where the wolf and dogs were tussling. Plunging into the mass, he seized the wolf, and the dogs, well trained, fell back at his command. In the water and up the bank he wrestled with the wolf, and subdued it. The camera got a fine picture of the performance.

The lobo is bigger than the coyote, and it required great physical strength as well as skill to overcome one. Abernathy, wearing a heavy leather glove, seized the lower jaw of the animal and held it firmly. It could not bite, only struggle and plunge, while with his other hand, he drew a rope about its neck. Those who may be curious about this feat may easily try it with a dog. With his lower jaw held firmly, he can only struggle. The simplicity of the method however, in no way detracts from Abernathy's prowess in catching wolves. It requires skill and great physical powers, with quickness and nerve.

The films were finished and in february, 1909, Bill, Abernathy and Chris Madsen went to Washington with them. President Roosevelt was greatly pleased and had a special showing in the East room of the White House. He invited a large company of friends, officials, and foreign diplomats, most of whom were the doubters who had smiled at his tale of the wolf catching. It was his laugh now.

The apparent hesitancy of the wolf at going in the water, was in reality, his pulling back against the wire that held him. The president's wilderness-trained eye at once caught the motion.

"Why," he asked, "did the wolf dance that way on the rock?" Abernathy was of course the principal and the hero of the occasion. But it was Bill's quick answer that saved the day.

"Well, you see, it was an awful hot day, Mr. President, and the rock burned his feet."

Mr. Roosevelt flashed his teeth. "I see," he said.

Regular news films were not then established, but the president secured them permission to take pictures of the inaugural of President William Howard Taft. Bill, as picture man of the party, accompanied the photographer to several places of vantage. A bitter snow storm raged during the whole time, but they got some good pictures of the procession.

Filming "The Outlaws"

Bill had had enough of pictures then. But now, when the primary campaign of 1914 ended in july, he was for the time unoccupied. E. D. Nix, with Chris Madsen and Bill, formed the Eagle Film company and arranged for the making of a picture. Mr. Nix also interested a Mr. Taylor in financing the venture. Colonel Lute Stover, who had done scenario work in Hollywood, wrote the script from material furnished by Bill.

The title chosen was "The Passing of the Oklahoma Outlaws." It contained the history of the destruction of the Doolin, Jennings, and Starr gangs. There was no plot, in the accepted sense of the term, and no one hero. The work of the officers was stressed, with the relentless lesson that crime does not pay. The true sordidness of the outlaw's life was shown, instead of a false glamour.

Every incident used was staged with historical accuracy. Bill used records where necessary. But his own mind was a storehouse of western history. He had a remarkable memory for events and dates and could relate instantly the story of any notable outlaw, or any bank or train robbery that occurred during his official days, whether he had any part in it or not. Newspaper men often called him for such information.

He made Chandler his headquarters, and J. B. Kent again was his camera man and adviser. Marshal E. D.

Nix, Chris Madsen, John Hale, and Caleb R. Brooks, who had been their colleague as United States attorney, appeared personally in the film. Arkansas Tom, sole survivor of the Doolin gang, who had been released after serving seventeen years of a fifty-year sentence, also joined Bill. He appeared in his own part, and he also afforded much of the inner history of the gang. Other outlaws and marshals were actors carefully made up from photographs. For the scenes of the capture of Doolin, the party journeyed to Eureka Springs, taking the pictures in the actual spots.

The battle at the Spike S Ranch, and the later capture of the Jennings gang was filmed with the advice of Marshal Bud Ledbetter, who acted his own part.

As the film work was nearing completion, an unlooked-for addition was made to outlaw history. Henry Starr, with a gang of four men, held up two banks at Stroud and escaped with the money although Starr himself was severely wounded in the hip and captured. Nevertheless, he had achieved a measure of success greater than either the James-Younger or the Dalton gangs, both of whom attempted to rob two banks at once, and both met disaster.

Stroud is in Lincoln county, about seventeen miles east of Chandler, where Bill was. He at once hurried there. Louis Estes, who carried the loot, had been shot, and fell from his horse a little way out of town. The money therefore was recovered. Seven men were convicted later from evidence secured by Bill. These men comprised about all the bank robbers then operating in Oklahoma.

By quick action Bill caught Joe Davis, "Alibi Joe," who had been charged with crimes thirty different times, but always was able to present a convincing alibi.

His father had a ranch not far from Muskogee, and Joe had his usual defense arranged for the Stroud affair. A hotel register, with names of other guests following, was unimpeachable evidence in court. And a livery stable keeper would have his horse booked at the same date.

Going straight to the hotel, Bill turned back the register. On the day of the robbery, a blank line was left among the regular signatures of guests. With Sheriff George Arnold and a deputy, Bill kept watch. About three hours later Joe Davis, who had lain hidden for twenty-four hours, until the pursuit should die down, came, as Bill expected.

The clerk flipped back the pages of the register. But as the robber started to write his name on the blank line, Bill and the sheriff and deputy were beside him, witnessing the act.

"Hold on there," said the sheriff. "You're wanted over at Stroud to explain what you know about that bank robbery."

"Alibi Joe's" alibi was broken at last, though it had worked many times before. The clerk confessed. Davis would have a room reserved at the hotel and the clerk would manage to have the blank line left on the register for that particular day. Signatures of bona fide guests followed. The livery stable keeper also admitted keeping a false record of Davis's horse.

Three others of the gang were arrested, and Bill got pictures of them as they were brought to Chandler. These also showed Zack Mulhall, a showman and famous character, who came to visit Henry Starr. Years before, Starr had stayed at his ranch, working with young Will Rogers. Both were destined to fame, one honored and one shamed.

Henry Starr pleaded guilty of the Stroud robbery and received a sentence of twenty-five years; but he had the promise of a parole because of information he gave. The others got sentences of three to five years. Bud Maxfield was killed in another bank robbery after his release. Starr was paroled in 1919. For some time he went straight. Bill saw him last in Kansas City. Returning, he went to Governor Robertson.

"Henry's got that wild look in his eye," he said. "He's getting ready to rob another bank, and you'd better revoke his parole."

"I will," said the governor. But before he took action, Bill's judgment was proved. In february, 1921, Starr attempted to rob the bank at Harrison, Arkansas, and was killed by the banker, who kept a shotgun ready inside the vault.

The picture was finished. It had cost months of nerve-racking effort.

In january, 1915, Bill paused to see his mother buried. Amanda Tilghman had died at the home of her daughter Josie at Dodge City; but the interment was at Chandler. One of his rare words of sentiment crept into his letter home:

> "Dear little Mother is resting again with Father, to-night."

He plunged into the picture making for a few weeks more. On march 15, he wrote:

> Dear Zoe: We are done here, thank the good Lord. Got through Saturday. The picture business was not in it with drafts, overdrawn accounts, protested checks, deeds, parcel post packages, telegrams, telephones, etc., that I have had to contend with here in the last few days, trying to get Nix and Old Man Taylor straightened out in some of their business deals.

> Taylor left last thursday for Kansas, so he said, and they have been trying to get him from that source. Nix has made some sales of land that Taylor was interested in, and deeds, drafts, and telegrams have been coming thick and fast, wanting me to find Taylor. I would wire back that he had gone home, and they would wire back that he was in Chandler.
>
> I located the Old Pup today. He has been in Oklahoma City having a good time and never went home until last night; and he sent a man up here to wire him as soon as he got there, to come to Chandler at once, as business of importance in connection with the Eagle Film demanded his presence here. *The Old Pup!* I will be home in a few days. Love.

The picture was well received. But on Bill fell the further task of promotion, securing the copyright, preparing advertising and publicity, getting lithographed posters. Then he must take it before a number of state censor boards. Kansas, reputedly a stiff test, was passed successfully. In fact, Bill never failed to get the picture approved by any city or state board which viewed it. "A moral lesson" he had planned it, and made it to that end.

The Eagle Film company, however, had no distributing organization. They set up an office in Oklahoma City, employing Mr. Jack Wall, who had had experience in such work, to advertise and secure routes and bookings. Part of the time he traveled as an advance agent. Mail bookings were found insufficient and they had to operate the picture as a road attraction. Chris Madsen and Nix both worked with copies for a time. But Madsen had to get back to the marshal's office, and Nix had too much other business. Neither, moreover, was as successful as Bill in showing the picture.

Thus he became, without intending it, a showman. After a few months they closed the office.

Bill built up a display of historic photographs of outlaws and officers, and a collection of guns and revolvers, that drew curious crowds before the theaters.

Nor was the attraction of the picture lacking. It drew good crowds, frequently broke house records, and was probably one of the best "repeaters" ever made. In some towns he showed it as many as five or six times, at intervals of four to six months; three days to a week each time. He also lectured with the picture, for one or two shows each night.

It was hard work, and Bill hated to be so much from home. He sold a number of state rights however.

By september, he had the whole show and advertising well organized, and ready to strike out. He had shown in a number of towns in Oklahoma, meantime. Denver was his first big town. Here he had some difficulty in securing a house, but at last booked the Tabor Grand Opera house for one week. He wrote letters home twice a week, sometimes every day.

> Sept. 1, 1915: . . We are doing well at the Tabor Grand, are having the biggest run of any picture show in Denver. . . My Lecture is a drawing card. . . The proprietor said yesterday he wouldn't have the picture without me. I wanted to go to Cheyenne Friday and Saturday, but he wouldn't let me go . . . I mailed the boys some cards today.
>
> Sept. 5th. Dear Zoe: We finished our engagement at the Tabor Grand last night. The week was a success in every way. The fact that the picture was shown a week at the Tabor Grand is a great advertisement, as the Tabor is classed as the best theater between Chicago and San Francisco. The receipts during the week were just even $1,500. After showing six days, the house at 8 o'clock last night was crowded to its utmost seating capacity. I talked about six hours yesterday and was completely worn out last night, but got up this morning feeling good . . I enclose

> you $10. Give the boys 50 cents each and tell them I sent it. Take good care of Tench and Richard. It bothers me very much to know they are sick.

The Eagle Film company, however, had a considerable debt, which Bill paid off with the picture, and eventually he bought out the partners. Smaller towns of course could not bring such returns as Denver, nor was business always so good. In january, they worked south, and he wrote from San Antonio:

> January 25, 1916. We opened up here today, but have got in a dead house and are doing no good. We just happened to get in a house that was not doing any business. Such bookings will happen and we can't help it . . We booked a Mexican house in the west town for Friday night and may get a little money there. I have some good towns for next week. I play the Globe theater at Houston four days, commencing Monday. Write me there; I enclose one dollar for the boys.

One pleasant aspect of the work was the meeting with many old friends in traveling around; and others who knew his name and his work, and were eager to talk with him. He was a favorite among the road show troupers, men and women, who named him affectionately, "Uncle Bill."

When he was able to get trusted and capable men to handle the picture, he had three or four films showing at once and was enabled to spend some time at home. His old stomach trouble continued, and in 1916 the doctors advised a rest, and outdoor life.

There was a living to be made, however, for he had no other resources. We therefore equipped our Ford with a camp outfit, including a tent, and set out on a leisurely tour of the mountains. He made some bookings of the picture, and at these towns we stopped for two or three days. The films and lobby were shipped by express. We camped and slept out all the time, not taking enough bookings to drive us or make heavy work for Bill. The plan was merely to make expenses. Our oldest son, Tench, was now eleven years old, and a dependable boy who helped his father considerably.

We had one wreck nearing Colorado Springs, where the car, hitting suddenly a mass of loose gravel that looked solid, jumped. The spokes of one wheel broke like match sticks, and the car went over once and a half in the air, landing on its side in a ravine. Bill suffered a cracked rib, but the children and I got no more than a few bruises.

Several cars stopped, of course, while we waited for a service car. People got out and looked at the wreck. One man edged up to me.

"Isn't that Bill Tilghman that used to have race horses at St. Louis?" he asked.

I replied that it was, and he hurried over to talk to Bill. Such recognitions became commonplace. Anywhere we went we were likely to run on to some one who knew Bill.

We had intended to spend the winter in Washington. But the first of november found us only as far east as St. Louis, where Bill stopped to see Mr. Nix. We rented an apartment then, and put the two older boys in school.

Bill went with the picture to Detroit, where he expected to work for some time. But soon he was taken very ill, and entered the hospital at Ann Arbor. Here he underwent an operation, and remained for some time. I went to him for a few days, but could not leave the children for long.

Chicago — Los Angeles

In may, 1917, Bill returned to St. Louis. The doctors had told him he would not live more than six months, although they had not determined just what was the matter. Bill did not tell me of their verdict for some time. As soon as school was out, we once more took our camp outfit and headed for Chicago. Bill wished to pass the picture before the censor board and get it showing there; then to go on to Yellowstone Park.

When he applied for a viewing of the picture, the answer was vague. They couldn't say when. After several visits, a certain man was pointed out, who was a member of the censor board.

"That man," Bill was told, "runs a private inspection bureau. And the board will generally pass any picture that is recommended by him."

Bill looked at his informant. "I have never paid any graft money," he said, "and I don't care to begin."

His application filed with the board, he presented himself every day for a hearing. But always he was put off. At last he employed an attorney, who secured the hearing. If this man paid part of his fee to the "private bureau" Bill did not ask. At any rate, the picture passed.

Only one scene in this film filled with outlaws and shooting and robberies, was deleted as injurious to the morals of Chicago youth. Where the Doolin gang fled across the unsettled portion of western Oklahoma, they had stopped to rest, and one of the party came in with a rabbit which he had shot. They had no other food, and one man began at once gathering weeds and sticks for a fire, while the others set about skinning the rabbit for cooking. This was only a flash, no disgusting detail.

But, to show they meant business, the censor board cut it out. The board was at that time a part of the police department. And Bill explained their action.

"The Chicago police are not going to stand for any skinning in Chicago, unless they do it themselves," he said.

He booked the show at Hammond, Indiana, and left Tench in charge while he came back for one of his futile visits to the censor office. Returning to Hammond, as he got on a crowded trolley train at South Chicago, he felt a push, and putting his hand in his pocket, found his roll of money gone. The car was filled with standing passengers, and he saw three men pushing their way to the exit. He followed, but the press was so great that he could not move quickly, and by the time he reached the platform the car was moving at a good speed. Nevertheless, he jumped off, rolling over on the right-of-way, and cutting his head deeply on the cinder ballast. Getting up dizzily, he saw the three men making off. He snatched up a heavy cinder as large as his fist, and ran after them. They too began to run, and one of them turned off. Bill kept after the other two, and presently caught up. They stopped.

"I want my money!" he said.

They made no attempt at denial. "Mister, we ain't got your money. That other feller has it."

"You're a liar!" was Bill's answer. And he drove the heavy clinker with all his force against the man's chest.

He staggered back, gasping, "Give it to him. Give it to him!" The other shoved the roll of money into Bill's hand.

But by that time, people on the street began to take notice, and a cry of "Thieves!" was raised. The two men darted down an alley, where they were headed off, and the police arrived. Bill who was trying to get his breath back, was taken in also. Blood from his cut head now ran down on his shoulder.

"What's the charge?" asked a big sergeant at the police station.

"Pickpockets," he was told. The sergeant rose, and with a volley of oaths and abuse, smashed one of the men a heavy blow in the chest. The man fell back against the wall, white-faced.

"Don't do that," he gasped weakly. "I'm just out of the hospital with an appendicitis operation."

His looks, and the fact that Bill, after his fall, had been able to overtake them so easily, showed that he spoke the truth. They were plainly professional pickpockets, but the needless brutality disgusted Bill. He put in a word of appeal.

"There's no need of that," he said. "I've got my money back; and I can lay a charge against them if you wish."

"Shut up or I'll give you a dose of the same," was the reply.

"Lock these two up. Court at nine o'clock to-morrow morning. You be here as witness."

"All I want is my money," said Bill. No, they would hold that for evidence.

"I've left my boy at Hammond with my show," he pleaded. "And I need at least car fare to get back there."

"If you don't get out of here I'll lock you up too," snarled the sergeant. Nor did any one about the station offer him aid, or a chance to wash the blood from his head. A man in the crowd handed him a quarter.

"Here's some car fare," he said. "You'll be lucky if you ever see a cent of that roll again."

Bill thanked him gratefully. Settling up with the theater that night gave him money for his immediate needs. In the morning at South Chicago, he was met with smiles and courtesy. The pickpockets had had time to call their lawyer, and the case was "fixed." Provided Bill would not push the charge.

The sergeant was persuasive. "These men are old offenders," he explained, "but they have put up bond. If you press this charge it may be six months before the case comes up, and you would have a long and expensive journey from Oklahoma as a witness. If you will not enter a complaint, we'll just give you your money back and release you. It will be better and less inconvenience for you."

"I know all that," said Bill levelly. "I've been an officer around courts for thirty years. You give me my money and I don't care what you do with your Chicago thieves."

A more kindly reception was given him by the police at Gary; and indeed everywhere else over the country. The fact that he was an old officer, whether they knew of his fame or not, brought kindness and respect.

When he settled with the show owner at Gary, he received forty one-dollar bills, besides some of larger denominations, which made a big roll, that might be spotted by men lurking outside the cashier's stall. Bill and Tench got in the car, which had a let-down front seat, to make a bed. They drove out on the

Chicago road, in a district of sand and jackoaks, with almost no houses. Coming to an open place, they pulled off the road to spend the night. Just before this two men on a motorcycle had passed them. He and Tench had fixed their bed and lain down, when Bill heard the motorcycle coming back. Presently a hand poked through the curtain of the car.

"Get out of here or I'll blow your head off!" he shouted. The hand disappeared, and somebody stumbled in the brush. Bill got out, flourishing one of his silver-and-pearl-handled guns which he used with the show exhibit. But he had not a single load for it. The motorcycle popped off. And they drove back to Gary. He reported at the police station, and the sergeant invited him to park beside the building for the remainder of the night.

We had put in nearly six weeks in and about Chicago on the censor business, with some show bookings in Indiana towns. Thoroughly tired of it, we headed west as soon as the picture was passed. It was now too late for our trip to Yellowstone. We stopped for two weeks at some lakes in northern Iowa, where fishing was good. This was the first chance that the boys had, and Bill taught them the sport. Thence I returned home by rail with the two younger boys, while Bill and Tench drove through Minnesota and Nebraska with the show, getting home early in november.

Bill's health was better, but he did not work steadily with the picture. It was war time and show houses had raised prices, yet were always full. Hence Bill made better money than before, and with less work.

In 1918, J. B. A. Robertson, after two unsuccessful campaigns, was elected governor. He offered Bill an appointment, but Bill declined. He was afraid of any confining office job, and few paid as much as he was then making in his business. About this time, too, he engaged an experienced showman, C. W. Stater, as advance agent, who also helped with the showing of the film between booking trips.

In the spring of 1920 they went to California. Theaters in Los Angeles refused to book the show. What could he offer to that headquarters for pictures?

"All right," Bill said, "what will you rent the house for?" He rented the Palace, one of the downtown theaters, at $1,250 for one week, with an advance payment of $250.

"The proprietor felt sorry for me monday night, and offered to cancel the contract," Bill wrote home. "But I told him I'd try it out. We had our 'nut' by Wednesday night; the rest of the week's receipts was 'velvet.' Except for rain friday, we would have broken all records for the house. As it was, they only had one bigger night, when one of the leading women stars made a personal appearance. . . I want to bring you and the boys out here for a trip."

The personal appearance was a form of advertising just then being used. But people found something fresh and dramatically interesting in this picture that was true. He made several other large showings, and sold the state right. The wife of the theater owner at Bakersfield, who assisted him, had become tired of pictures and seldom looked at one. She saw "The Outlaws" through three times, and remarked on it to Bill.

"Why do you like it? What is its attraction?" he asked.

She hesitated. "I think," she said, "it is because of its sincerity. It is so different from the rest that are just made up."

In Los Angeles Bill visited with another old companion of Dodge City, Wyatt Earp, whom he had not seen for forty years.

Returning, he bought a new car for me, and with the old one carrying the show stuff, we went on a leisurely camping vacation, making expenses as before. After a trip to Yellowstone Park, we drove south along the mountains to Trinidad, Colorado, and there turned west across the Continental Divide for a visit with Henry Born, "Dutch Henry," who had a fishing lake and a homestead high up in the San Juan range. Here we spent a delightful week with Henry and his family.

A Governor Calls

A new kind of outlawry, that aimed at the subversion of the law itself, brought a crisis which called Bill back briefly into official action.

Soon after World War I, the Ku Klux Klan spread through the country. Attaining a large membership in Oklahoma, its leaders felt strong enough to make demands upon the governor.

J. B. A. Robertson flatly refused them, and met the challenge by an order that no officer of the state militia should be a member of the Klan. This was a direct blow at the ambitions of the Klan, which early sought to control all police powers.

Whippings and other outrages of terrorism occurred, but the victims were always warned to keep quiet, and the newspapers, if they knew, were careful not to mention these incidents too plainly. It was not until after Governor Walton succeeded Governor Robertson that the Klan battle was openly joined.

There was trouble enough before this, the most serious being the race riots at Tulsa, in which the Negro district of the city was burned, and many killed.

In the post-war depression many banks had failed, among them the Citizens State bank of Okmulgee. It brought ruin to many, and distress to all of its more than four thousand depositors. Leading Klansmen were implicated in its failure, but the onus was thrown on John H. Rebold, the president, and the state banking department. Klan leaders saw here their chance to capitalize on the general bitterness over the bank failure, and to strike at the governor who had defied them.

A year prior to its failure, the Citizens bank had taken over the Guaranty State bank of Okmulgee. This bank was in a solvent condition, and sold for more than its liabilities, its stock-holders receiving a profit from the sale. Nevertheless, the claim was propagandized, that the failure of the Citizens bank was due to affairs of the Guaranty bank which it had taken over. Blame was placed on the governor, through his appointee, Fred Dennis, state bank commissioner. It was charged that both had secured large sums of money through illegal transactions in the bank.

A grand jury was called, and the governor also directed the attorney-general to investigate the bank failure. Proceedings were begun in the superior court at Okmulgee, of which H. R. Christopher, a Roman Catholic, was judge. The Klan was actively hostile to Catholics and Jews. Now the Klansmen of Okmulgee so insulted and threatened the judge that he hastily adjourned court and fled. From another town, miles away, he called the governor by telephone to declare his resignation. Governor Robertson refused to accept.

"Go back and hold court," he told Christopher, "and if necessary, the entire militia of the state will be called to protect you."

The judge went back, but soon left again, this time out of the state, and sent his resignation by letter.

Next was the calling of another grand jury in february, 1922, of which the Klan had full control. This was proved and became a matter of record in trials growing out of the trouble. The judge was disqualified from sitting in these cases because he was a Klansman and had discussed pending cases with Klan members.

Learning of this new grand jury, Governor Robertson instructed the bank commissioner, Fred Dennis, to take the books of the failed bank, then in custody of the state banking department, to Okmulgee, that the grand jury might examine them. Mr. Dennis declared that he would not go to Okmulgee, and resigned forthwith. He immediately went away and this act lent some color to the charges of crookedness.

In this situation, the governor determined to take the books to Okmulgee himself, where it was openly declared that the grand jury intended to indict the governor and the bank commissioner.

They had driven out Judge Christopher and intimidated Fred Dennis. But J. B. A. Robertson was a fighter who feared nothing and no man. Still, he was not foolhardy. Dennis believed that he would be deliberately shot down if he entered Okmulgee. Robertson didn't intend to be.

"Call up Bill Tilghman," he told his secretary. "Tell him I want him."

In the next forenoon, a car drove up to the courthouse in Okmulgee. Klansmen and others gasped.

"It's the governor!"

"Yes, and some others!" The others were known and recognized: Bill Tilghman, Chris Madsen, Baird H. Markham, state Adjutant-General, and Major A. Herskowitz, an officer of the National Guard. Coming down the steps to welcome them were Fred Cooke, a former railroad police officer; and William H. Crume, Bill's old under-sheriff at Chandler, now a banker and influential citizen of Okmulgee.

Furtive glances and sullen looks met them from others. The governor walked straight in to the office of the county attorney, while Bill and the rest remained in the lobby. A hundred and fifty people soon gathered here, and on the steps outside. Many of them knew Bill and some greeted him.

The county attorney received the governor with courtesy, but refused to let him go before the grand jury or to present the bank books. Even when the governor offered to sign a sworn waiver of immunity–which he would acquire as a witness–he still refused. The governor then declared that he would take the books direct to the grand jury. The two of them came out of the office, and the attorney spoke to Mr. Crume:

"Show the governor around, will you, Crume."

State senator Horner, who of course knew the governor, was standing near, and shook hands cordially. Next to him was James Lyons, a Klansman, whom Mr. Crume introduced. Robertson's proffered hand was ignored.

"I'll not shake hands with any . . . crook!" sneered Lyons.

Lightning swift, the governor's right hand slapped his face, the left following with a smashing uppercut. Bill and Madsen and Crume seized him, while others grabbed Lyons. Shaking them off, the governor pushed to the lower step of the stairway, and facing the crowd, he spoke. Not ever profane in his usual speech, he showed an amazing proficiency, "Till he ran out of cuss words," as one listener described it. But he used other words more blistering than oaths.

Hostile as they were, the crowd was cowed. The governor, six-feet-and-280-pounds of muscle, was a first class fightin' man, and he had given them all they wanted just then. They did not care to see Tilghman and Madsen in action also.

Governor Robertson went to the room of the grand jury, but was refused admittance. Although called for the purpose of investigating the bank failure, they would not inspect or receive the books of the bank. It was afterwards admitted in court that the Klan leaders had made up the list of this grand jury, and given it to the judge and attorney who must issue the summons. The foreman now said to the governor, "We know what we're here for."

They proceeded to do it. After refusing the most pertinent evidence, they indicted the governor, the bank commissioner, Fred Dennis, and some others. The cases, however, were not tried in the Klan-controlled court of Okmulgee, as they planned. In fact, few of them came to a real trial, being thrown out of court because of the illegal formation and actions of the grand jury.

With the governor in conference and the others on guard, Bill mingled with the crowds, gathering from the talk of friends and strangers ideas of the situation, and of past and present troubles. But when the governor left the courthouse, he stayed near him constantly. They remained overnight at a hotel; and held many conferences. There was undoubtedly much bitterness in the town. And the governor, thoroughly aroused, was not conciliatory. The Klansmen smarted with the feeling that they had come off second best in the affair at the courthouse. Some of the leaders told Bill plainly that they would "get" the governor before he left town. It was W. H. Crume who told of this in later time.

"You know, that quiet way of Bill's," he said. "He just said to them, 'Now if I were you I wouldn't start anything.'"

That quiet word brought a chill to their fury. They knew his loyal devotion to the law, his disinterested calmness. He would endeavor to restrain the governor if he thought him acting rashly. He would uphold the law, too, which they sought to override. In that time of heat and passion, both sides trusted him. And afterward–even years later when he had paid the last sacrifice–the verdict was voiced by many.

"There would have been bad trouble and bloodshed that day, if it had not been for Bill Tilghman."

Turbulent Politics

In the late spring of 1921, Bill went east with the picture, stopping for a time at Detroit. Here he met Jack Dempsey, then the ring champion, and a former Oklahoman. Working with Bill was Charles Myton, long a railroad man, but also with previous experience in the prize ring. Bill, since his Dodge City days had been interested in boxing. So they were glad to combine business with pleasure, and be in New York at the time of the Dempsey-Carpentier championship bout. Bill was ill, often hardly able to keep going, and he sent for Tench to join him as soon as school was out.

His picture did very well when he could secure bookings, but by this time the large producers were operating strings of theaters, or tying up operators in contracts. Thus it was hard for any independent picture to get into the good houses.

In New York Bill visited his old partner, Bat Masterson, who for many years had been a sports writer for the *New York Telegraph*. Partly through Masterson, Bill and Charles Myton purchased a film print of the Dempsey-Carpentier fight, with rights for showing in Oklahoma. The film was showing to packed houses around New York.

This deal was an involved matter. Some years before, when the former pugilist champion Jack Johnson was a fugitive and draft evader, he fought a ring battle at

Havana, Cuba, of which films were made. Congress thereupon passed a law forbidding interstate transportation of fight films. This, of course, prevented the showing of the Johnson films, on which he and his backers had counted for a large profit.

Bill was assured, however, that the department of justice of the Harding administration recognized this as a special measure, past its usefulness; that there would be no objection to showing the Dempsey-Carpentier films; or if the department felt it necessary to observe the proprieties – the law being still on the statute books – there would be only a nominal fine.

Bill also checked this with a former Oklahoman, then living in New York, and reputed to be in the confidence of Attorney-General Harry Daugherty. Myton was willing to carry the films himself, a set being not too bulky to carry in a specially made suitcase. This avoided any difficulty with the express company about shipping them. On arrival in Oklahoma, he surrendered to the U.S. marshal, was arraigned in United States district court, and assessed a moderate fine, which he paid. They then proceeded to show the picture.

Soon after this, the scandals of the Harding administration broke, with Harry Daugherty a central figure. Bill and Myton were summoned to testify before a court in New Jersey, in which state the fight had taken place; and before a senatorial committee at Washington. Evidence was sought on whether a deal had been made between Daugherty and the fight promoters, to permit transportation of these films.

Bill could testify that it had been so represented to him, although no statements were made that Daugherty had accepted bribes for that purpose.

On the senate committee was Senator Burton K.

Wheeler, an ardent investigator, who had been a powerful antagonist for the corrupt ring. The administration had attempted to shut him off, or discredit him by getting an indictment against him, though on questionable grounds. Bill had given his testimony, and Myton was called to the stand. The big ex-heavyweight impressed the senator as an easy victim.

"You've been a law-breaker all your life!" he stormed in his fiercest cross-examining manner. The witness sat silent.

"You knew," he went on; "You knew, when you took those films to Oklahoma you were breaking the law! You knew you were liable to be indicted, didn't you?"

The big man in the chair sighed deeply.

"Well–I guess I did. And that indictment–You're under indictment yourself, senator. It's right unpleasant, ain't it?"

A snicker that even his high position could not suppress, went round the committee room, which was thronged. The senator's colleagues struggled to conceal smiles. Wheeler himself straightened up, with a sort of choking noise, and walked out of the room. Senator Moses took up questioning of the witness.

At home, while Bill had been in New York, certain men came to see me. They wanted Bill to run for sheriff of Oklahoma county the next year. They made no conditions. Nor was it apparent that they had any other interest than the public good. They knew Bill's efficiency. And his reputation and popularity if he became a candidate, would help the ticket and the party. So, with no strings attached to the proposition, they took Bill's address and wrote to him; asking me to write also.

When Bill returned, he talked it over with these men, and with other friends, all of whom urged him to run. The call of official work was tempting. And by all political calculations – not the too-hopeful thinking of the candidate – he stood a strong chance to win.

The campaign of 1922 was the most stirring the state had known. The post-war hard times had increased the strength of the Farmer-Labor organization. The Socialist party had been destroyed by its opposition to the war, and its large number of adherents found a new political home here. Now the Farmer-Labor moved in on the Democratic party and became for a time dominant. They endorsed as candidate for governor, J. C. (Jack) Walton. To the victims of economic distress, the great "common people," he became a hero and a darling. Yet Mr. Walton, while a commissioner, and later mayor of Oklahoma City, had made many enemies.

To personal feelings and the heart-burnings of distress, was added a third element; the baser emotions of prejudice and hatred. For this year the Ku Klux Klan went into the campaign to win control of the state, as they already had of many school boards and local officials. It is believed that at this time the Klan had about one hundred thousand members in Oklahoma, a bloc sufficient to swing almost any election.

So far as it was known to the public, it represented only its fine-sounding, platitudinous "principles." Its record of violence and terrorism was yet to be revealed. Scattered cases of whippings; firing of Roman Catholic school teachers; attacks on Jews, were not yet known to be the Klan activities.

The Farmer-Labor and radical elements were united for Mr. Walton, and the conservative forces divided among several candidates. In the final ten days before the primary, the Klan let it be known that it was solidly behind R. H. Wilson, former state superintendent of public instruction.

Here they mis-calculated. They expected the followers of the other candidates to unite on Wilson to beat Walton. But none of the other candidates withdrew, and each got a portion of the votes cast. Walton, moreover, received the votes of many, hitherto undecided, who were now against Wilson from the very fact that the Klan was for him. As in every election, too, many who preferred some other candidate, voted for the man who seemed the most likely winner. So Mr. Walton won the nomination by a good majority; and in spite of an organization of bolting Democrats who supported the Republican nominee, he was elected governor by a fifty thousand majority.

Although Bill's campaign for sheriff was only in Oklahoma county, the local race was affected by the same influence as the state campaign. Many of Walton's followers demanded a statement from candidates, how they stood in regard to "Jack."

Mr. Walton was a comparative newcomer in the state, and had entered politics after Bill had become inactive. So their personal acquaintance was slight. At the outset of his campaign, Bill called on Mr. Walton, and told him that while he did not expect his support, he hoped he would not actively support any other candidate for sheriff.

"You can count on that," returned Mr. Walton. "And you are sure of two votes, Mrs. Walton's and mine, if you do not get another one." This wholly unexpected kindness was gratefully appreciated by Bill.

The Klan soon sent a suggestion that he should join the organization. It turned out that the seemingly disinterested men who had first proposed that he should run for sheriff, were Klansmen. He ignored the message, and the next move came through one of his best and oldest friends. This man urged him to join, and recited a story of alleged insulting conduct by a Jewish physician toward a young woman.

"Oughtn't such a man to be taken out and whipped?" he appealed.

"Not with a masked mob, at least," returned Bill. "If you think that is what the case demands, let the girl's father go and lick him openly, like a man."

The conversation disturbed him greatly. It was a real hurt to know that his old friend had espoused this sinister movement. At home, he referred to it several times in the days that followed.

"Who would have thought!" he said, "that J-- would have taken up with that stuff?"

"I don't understand it," I agreed.

Some three months later Bill came home with the late street edition of the paper in his hand.

"Here's why J-- joined the Klan," he said. There was the news of an alleged irregular deal in school bonds in a neighboring city, and the grand jury had indicted J-- for part in it.

"He knew this was coming," said Bill. "And he was looking for protection from a Klan jury."

At last a direct offer came from Klan headquarters. If he would join them, the organization would get behind him, and elect him sheriff.

"I'd rather cut off my right arm," he told them. "If I go into the sheriff's office I'll be there to uphold the law. I will go in free, not bound to any one."

His prospect for the nomination still looked good, when on the sunday before the election on tuesday, the Klan played its trump card. In every automobile about the churches, and elsewhere, they placed a handbill with a "good government" endorsed ticket, a Republican slate on one side, and Democratic on the other. At the top were "principles" such as honest government and enforcement of the law. If you want these, it said, vote for the listed candidates.

"That beats me," said Bill as we looked it over. We had just come out of church and picked up the handbill in the car. It was a smart political move, and as he predicted, was effective. Hundreds of voters knowing little of politics–unfortunately too many of them in the churches–and not even thinking to inquire who was behind this "good government" ticket, swallowed the bait whole. The Klan elected its ticket in the county.

Soon after the primary, Bill went to Wisconsin with his picture, but almost immediately became very ill, and went to Battle Creek, Michigan, for treatment. Here he improved, and returned home shortly before Christmas.

The next summer, 1923, Bill went to Colorado and New Mexico with his picture and thus was absent when the "Walton war" between the governor and the Klan, raged in the state. Governor Walton forced the Klan into the open, and while he was ousted from office, the exposure of the true character of the organization marked the beginning of its decline.

The governor had other foes: old enemies, and a clique of the Farmer-Laborites who turned against him when they failed to run the administration. After nine months of his term, the legislature met in special session, and voted impeachment charges against him.

The senate then tried the case, and he was removed from office.

During the investigation, one witness called was picturesque Colonel Zack Mulhall, pioneer cattleman and showman. Mulhall had been appointed a health inspector, which it was understood was a sinecure. The committee questioned him. Had he ever performed any work? What had he done to earn his salary? Colonel Zack resented the implication.

"Certainly I worked," he said.

"What did you do?" persisted the chairman.

"Well . . . one time I inspected a fruit stand."

"How did you inspect it? What did you find?"

"Oh, I ate several of his bananas, and told him he'd better clean up a bit."

"And did you make a report of this?"

"No." "Why not? That was part of your duty, wasn't it?"

The gray haired colonel leaned back in the chair, superbly nonchalant.

"Maybe so," he said, "but he was a Greek, and I couldn't spell his name."

"Call Bill Tilghman"

On Governor Walton's removal, M. E. Trapp, lieutenant-governor, became the executive. He was experienced in government, having held a county office, then state auditor, and thrice elected lieutenant-governor. Bill had been his friend since, as a small boy, Trapp sold peaches from his father's farm, to the marshals riding by.

One of the new governor's first problems was a camp of fifty convicts, who had been brought to do improvement work on the grounds of the state capitol. Many of them were of the hard type, not usually selected for outside work. They were installed in a camp house near the capitol, with a high wire fence, and guards. They had expected pardons from the former governor when the job was completed.

Governor Trapp turned to his secretary.

"Call Bill Tilghman," he said.

Bill, who had been away for two months, had arrived home at ten-thirty the night before, after a 1200-mile trip from New Mexico, driving his picture truck; a battle with mud all the way. He was worn out. Before he had risen in the morning came the governor's telephone call. In an hour he was in the executive office.

Governor Trapp leaned back and twisted his cigar.

"I called you, Bill . . . I have a grapevine report that these convicts are planning a break. The guards are still there, most of them, but since the legislature stopped their pay, they don't care. Aside from upholding the law, you know what a holler there'd be if these convicts got away. After all this row and confusion, I'm supposed to hold things quiet and straighten it out. Now what shall I do about them?"

"Send them right back to the penitentiary," replied Bill.

The worry cleared from Governor Trapp's face.

"Well, then, will you take charge of them and do it? What help will you need? Get some old deputy sheriffs and policemen?"

"That would take at least a day or two. Why not use the militia?"

"They could be on duty in two hours." He pressed the buzzer. "Call Major Herskowitz," he directed.

The military orders were quickly prepared for the Major to take a squad of men, and to cooperate with Bill. They had shared an emergency before, when both went with Governor Robertson to Okmulgee. Bill came home for lunch and an hour's nap. At five o'clock, the militia men appeared at the camp, and were stationed around it. To the surprised guards, Bill presented his written order to take charge.

"It's all off, boys. We waited a day too long!" called a voice in the convicts' mess hall. A light rain was falling, and the night promised to be dark – the opportunity for which they had been waiting.

Bill had asked for a special railroad car, which was ordered and ready in the morning. With the militia guards, the convicts were marched to it. The car was attached to the regular train, and the run was uneventful. At McAlester, the warden met them with sufficient busses. So all were returned safely, without a hitch.

Bill remained at home for a much-needed rest. Before he was ready to resume his picture work, the governor appointed him special officer, his work being to gather information and otherwise aid the governor. He was busy for some time checking up on men who had broken or overstayed their paroles. Governor Walton had been lavish in granting such clemency, and there were many delinquents.

He went to Tennessee after one murderer, but the man had just escaped to Cuba. Not all the cases were sent back. Careful investigation convinced Bill that a restaurant keeper had been unjustly convicted on a narcotic charge, one of his kitchen employees having handled the dope without his knowledge. Another, a middle-aged farmer, he found picking cotton. In the house was his wife, dying of tuberculosis, and an invalid son. Bill brought this man to the governor's office.

"He's got no influence, no senator or representative to speak for him, governor," Bill said. "But right here is all the evidence you need for extending his parole."

He lifted up the man's hand, grimed and gnarled from picking cotton.

"He went home and put in a crop. He's worked hard to try to provide for his family; and they need him."

In the spring of 1924, Bill went as the governor's investigator into the coal fields in the eastern part of the state.

Of this, Parker Lamoore, secretary to the governor, and later, editor of one of the large papers of the Scripps-Howard group of newspapers, wrote in 1938 to Senator Josiah Bailey:

> While he (Bill) was working for the governor's office, we had

> occasion to send him, alone, to the coal fields, where some imported thugs were making trouble. Troops had been requested, but Mr. Tilghman was sent alone to look into the situation. By tact and unyielding persuasion, he quieted the entire situation.

In june, he made a last vacation trip to attend the dedication of a monument at Adobe Walls, on the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. He was one of the three or four persons present who actually knew the place at that time.

We visited Dodge City, and on our return, drove through Woods and Woodward counties, locating Bill's old camps, and the cave from which he had so narrowly escaped. Changes since the settlement of the country made this search somewhat difficult. But some of the camp sites he found little changed. At my solicitation, he had been making notes for his memoirs for some months, and this trip was especially to aid in that work.

Cromwell — Oklahoma's Oil Boom

In the old Seminole country seventy miles east of Oklahoma City, the boom oil town of Cromwell sprang up. It was a region of rough hills, outcropping rocks, light, sandy soils, and jack-oak timber. Here was a rich shallow field. There was no control or supervision of the industry at that time. The flush production was taken and eighty per cent of the oil left in the ground. High wages were paid to the rough-necks whose main qualification was physical strength. The skilled technicians who now conduct the work by scientific methods were yet to come.

Twelve hours "on tower"–the oil field word for "tour" of duty–; in mud or dust, and grease or oil; with death keeping grim watch upon the derricks. The men lived in shacks or oil-field boarding houses hastily thrown together of thin lumber. They spent their money recklessly and freely.

In the boom town, the hordes of prey assembled. There were "rooming houses," filled with prostitutes; dance halls where the girls would dance with the oil men for twenty-five cents a dance; gamblers, bootleggers, and dope peddlers; dope fiends, pitiful victims, but ready for thievery or worse to obtain their drug; thieves and hi-jackers, a shifting but continuous element.

There was legitimate business, stores and eating places, garages, and picture shows. Owners of these were settled, at least for the time, and usually had their families. Traveling men came through; a sprinkling of poor farmers from the inhospitable hills; lease and royalty buyers.

The state commissioner of charities and corrections, Mabel Bassett, visited the place and took charge of some youthful delinquents. The district judge, George C. Crump, held court, and, since there was no jail, had those convicted fastened to a long chain overnight, until they were moved to the county jail at Wewoka. Lurid stories appeared in the press, nationally, of Cromwell, "The wickedest boom town in the United States."

Rank corn liquor flowed freely. Stills were scattered at old farm cabins. Truck loads rolled in from distant sources. Bootleggers plied their trade by many and devious ways.

National prohibition was in effect. Oklahoma had its own dry-law from the beginning. In a last plea to congress, Pleasant Porter, chief of the Creeks, said: "You are taking our land. You have broken all your other promises to us. But this one pledge we ask you still to keep: that the deadly liquor shall be kept from the Red man."

Enforcement therefore was the duty of state officials, as well as the federal enforcement organization. Narcotics, of course, were forbidden by stringent federal law. Nevertheless, both liquor and narcotics were abundant in Cromwell.

The business men formed a chamber of commerce; proceedings for incorporating the town were begun. The several leading oil companies were willing to give financial aid, for protection of their business and employees. The secretary of the chamber of commerce was W. E. Sirmans, lease and royalty dealer. He was a friend of E. D. Nix, and through him had met Bill. On august 25 he wrote Bill:

> Mr. Nix was here, and I asked him if he thought it possible to get you to come down here and take charge of the situation and clean up this town of hop peddlers and gamblers. I have taken it up with the crowd here, and they wanted me to telegraph you to come at once, but I refused to do so, as I wanted you to thoroughly understand conditions here before you came, as it is only fair to you.
>
> We have a boom town of about 5,000 people, with the usual hop peddlers, liquor joints, etc. We are not incorporated, but will be in about sixty days. . .
>
> As soon as we started out, the graft collectors realized that would stop their money, so they set up a fight, and we found that the sheriff refused to commission any man we wanted. The county attorney refused to help; and in fact they tied our hands so we can not do a thing.
>
> The business men of Cromwell realize they can do nothing unless they can secure a man like you with a reputation for honesty and as the most notable officer in Oklahoma, and a man that the sheriff of this county will not dare refuse a commission to, to come here and take charge of things. All of the business men will be back of you. I am afraid the sheriff and the county attorney will not back us up. The gamblers pay $2,500; each lodging house that has women, $40 a month (we have 31 of them). I don't know what the liquor and slot machines pay. But you see they are not going to give that up without a fight. But we have closed the gambling houses. Judge Crump did that.
>
> We are interested now in getting the hop peddlers and criminals out of town, and the balance will come gradually. We want their graft payment stopped, and the only way to stop them is to stop the protection. We also have a few highjackers here and we want to change their place of residence.
>
> We want you to come immediately, and if you will come, wire me you will come for $400 a month and your expenses from Oklahoma City here.

Once more the call to dangerous official work. This was his true profession, the place where he belonged.

Fifty years since that first call had come to him, a slim lad of nineteen; and scores of times repeated. He had never refused it.

Bill visited Cromwell, and talked with the reputable business men. They agreed to provide him with one assistant. The incorporation proceedings would be completed in about ten days. He discussed the matter with Governor Trapp, who had received reports, and appeals from Cromwell, for quelling the rank outlawry. He felt that Bill could handle the situation. But he did not urge it.

"It's a bad place, Bill," he said, "and these modern criminals are not like your old outlaws that had a sense of honor and gratitude, and decency in certain ways. These dope runners and the like would sooner shoot you in the back than meet you face to face."

I too, had misgivings. But I had never seen or known any such evil place; and I had confidence in Bill. He had always taken risks. It was part of his profession. Moreover, I could see the real satisfaction he took in the return to official work. "It will only be for a few months," he told me.

The governor advised him to keep his state commission, but gave him a leave of absence from the governor's office. This was well, for the sheriff of Seminole county at first refused to give Bill a deputy's commission. But when Bill went ahead and took charge at Cromwell, he grudgingly gave it. Sirmans's report on the situation was borne out. Judge George C. Crump, however, gave Bill all the support in his power.

So Bill took up his work, with some friends, some open enemies, and many more that pretended friendship but hated him for coming there. The incorporation of the town was voted, and the council hired Bill as chief of police. The hostile elements sought to hold on a while longer, by filing a suit protesting incorporation. Eventually they lost.

A single street of a few blocks, with another street at one end making a T, formed the business town, with the flimsy oil field dwellings straggling out along the highways or back in the brush. One of Bill's first acts was to direct installation of water barrels for fire; and to enforce some clean-up and sanitary orders.

"The town is going up in a big blaze some day," he said, and later it did. "And typhoid is likely to break out any time."

Dope addicts, irresponsible creatures, driven to obtain their drugs, kept up constant petty thievery. The fourth day of Bill's tenure, there came to him a little and excited Jew. He slept, he said, on a cot in a cubbyhole back of his clothing shop. This morning, while he was out for breakfast, someone stole his cot.

Bill soon discovered the missing article, and the thief, a dope addict known as "Snake," who had sold it. He took them both to the Jew's store.

"Is this your cot?" he asked. The man identified it by certain marks. Snake stood by miserably.

"Well," said Bill, matter-of-factly, "here is the man who stole it. Now you just take this gun and shoot him, and he'll not steal any more."

He held out his own gun. His face was serious, and they had not learned to look for the twinkle in his eye. Snake stared at him in horror. The Jew was scarcely less perturbed.

"No, no! I couldn't do that!" he protested. "That would be against the law. I'd get arrested myself. I got my cot back. That's enough."

Bill spoke with cool indifference.

"You might as well kill him. He's a nuisance about town, and no earthly good, even to himself. It would be the best thing to get rid of him."

Snake took all this in, half expecting the officer to shoot him if the Jew did not. Well he knew there would be no fuss over his demise. It would be said he was attempting to escape, attacked the officer—any excuse or none. Who cared?

"No, no, no! I couldn't kill him. I can't shoot a gun!" babbled the Jew.

"Well then, Snake, get along," said Bill. "Since he don't want to do anything to you, I guess I'll have to let you go. Only don't run around stealing any more. See if you can't pick up enough work to live. And if I can, I'll help you."

Snake had had his morning "shot" after disposing of the cot, and it was now taking effect. His nerves were soothed, and he was, for the time being, normal and rational. He stood amazed.

"Ain't you even going to run me out of town?" he asked.

"Not unless I have to. If you want to stay here and behave yourself I'll not bother you. There's a better chance for you to find something you can do in a boom town, than you'd get somewhere else."

Snake's haggard face was working. He broke down, sobbing. So long had he been enslaved with the dope, and kicked around, despised, that he did not expect anything else. The words of kindness reached down to the remnants of manhood beneath the wreckage.

"I'll do it, Uncle Bill!" he said, using the title by which Bill was generally known in Cromwell. From that time he was a devoted friend. He gave no more trouble, and often brought Bill valuable information.

Of course, he still had his dope, but he kept on good behavior.

The last page in Bill's little pocket expense book shows only a few items:

Dray hauling	$2.50
Woman and kid	1.50
Hop	1.50
Snake	1.50

Nameless unfortunates, whom his generous kindliness was always helping. Hop, like Snake, was another of the fraternity of the lost.

The extent and viciousness of the dope business here was something Bill had never met before. It far exceeded what he had known in Oklahoma City, with a population twenty times as great. There, he had a large police force to cope with it. Here, he stood alone. He arrested the regular dope-heads, like Snake, "got a line on them" to keep them under control. But he knew he could never dip the spring dry. Quietly, he set himself to stop the flow at its source.

A young man with some experience as an officer was hired as Bill's assistant. He stayed only long enough to collect his first salary check. The governor's secretary then sent over an older man who was of considerable help.

One day a tall, dark-faced man, in his thirties, with a long nose and narrow eyes, came into town. He introduced himself.

"I'm Wiley Lynn, Uncle Bill," he said, "prohibition enforcement officer for this district."

Their meeting was amicable. Bill, devoted in his heart to the government which he had served so long, was ready to respect its officer. Yet he spoke warily.

He had not been here long enough yet, to know the secret line-ups. Lynn, for his part, could not afford to show antagonism for another officer, and especially one of Bill's standing.

But it was only a few days after this that Bill arrested a bootlegger, with a supply of the goods in evidence, and delivered both to the county sheriff at Wewoka. Twenty-four hours later, the man was again at his business in Cromwell. Bill telephoned the sheriff's office. The answer was frank.

"Mr. Lynn phoned over from Holdenville to turn that fellow loose. So we did."

Then Bill knew. He had run into the official "protection." Sirmans had said the county authorities were in league with the lawless. Here was the federal as well.

From that hour Wiley Lynn was his enemy.

Lynn was a part-blood Choctaw from the southern part of the state. This summer, the federal bureau of investigation had broken up an interstate ring of automobile thieves, with the arrest of Lynn's uncle and cousin. Their ranch near Madill was the headquarters; cars were stored in a large barn and repainted before being run off to be sold.

Wiley Lynn, however, had not been officially charged with concern in this business. He was married, had a son nearly grown, and lived at Holdenville, county seat town about twenty miles from Cromwell. His association with Rose Lutke, madam of a brothel at Wewoka, was common knowledge.

Dance halls gave Bill no particular trouble. Mrs. Mabel Bassett, state commissioner, came to investigate reports that girls under sixteen were working there, and Bill assisted her. The Murphy dance hall and restaurant came into the limelight especially, through a political move. An election was coming up in a large city not far away, which had its populous underworld. The prosecutor, who wanted re-election, devised a grand-stand play. He left the county folks alone, but dropped over into the next county, where he had no jurisdiction, and caused the arrest of Mr. and Mrs. Murphy. He brought them back and had them arraigned in his own court.

The newspapers fell on it as sensational copy and played it up. The headlines read, "Dance Halls Must Go, Says Prosecutor." The good folk of the city were convinced that their attorney was an able and zealous foe of vice and voted for him. The underworld held him a wise guy who was "right," and likewise voted for him. Soon after his re-election, the Murphy case came up and was dismissed on a brief hearing.

The Murphys preferred a legitimate business, such as it was, to paying protection money. It can be understood that they were not eyed with favor by the local powers.

In Line of Duty

Bill kept the town at peace. There were drunken men, but if one became obstreperous, he would arrest him or send him off. The six-by-nine foot log hut which was supposed to be a jail, one night burned to the ground. Those arrested for more serious crimes, he could send to the county jail. Once he had a shooting bout with two high-jackers, whom he arrested just outside of town and recovered a stolen car that they were driving.

Soon he won general friendship and respect. Sirmans, Caldwell, the druggist, and Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Curtis were his closest friends. Curtis was manager of a casing crew, which went on call to service drilling wells. Mrs. Curtis kept a home-like atmosphere with the poor facilities of the boom town, and at their home he could relax.

But the criminal and grafting ring whose hold he menaced, nursed a mounting hatred. Fate Sanders, his assistant, crowded in front of him when a call came one night from an upstairs room. Two men and a woman waited there. Sanders later told me, "They had it fixed to murder him that night. They had driven to Shawnee, all three of them and registered at a hotel, for an alibi, then had come back to kill him."

Bill watched the dope-heads, Snake and others. He spotted some of the dope peddlers. At the picture show, he noted a man, woman and little boy about four years old. Every night they came and found seats near the aisle. But a dozen times an evening, the man would be in and out.

One night, as the house closed, Bill halted the family at the door. The man submitted cheerfully to search. "You can get a woman to search my wife, too," he volunteered.

Bill nodded to Sanders to watch them. "Come here, sonny," he said. Then his hand shot out to grab the man's collar, as he tried to run.

Inside the boy's coat Bill found specially made pockets, some empty, some holding capsules of cocaine. Taking one at a time, the man would go out and meet his customer; then come back for another. Carrying one only, if arrested he could get off lightly, as an addict. But possession of a quantity was legal proof of purveying.

Mabel Bassett, commissioner of charities and corrections, came and took charge of the boy, holding his mother not a fit person to have him. She was not the man's wife, and in fact did not live with him. He came by her rooming place to take them to the show.

But always Bill sought for the main dealer, the source of the supply, whom the peddlers themselves did not know. They got their stuff from two or three, who alone could contact the "big shot." Here a hint, there a suspicion. In september Bill learned with surety that a shipment of narcotics had arrived in the oil fields, by plane, from Mexico; and that within four hours a protection fee of five thousand dollars had been paid. But he still lacked the legal proof.

He had found his man; a reputed lease dealer by the name of Killian, who came through now and then, well-dressed, driving a Cadillac car. He watched more closely. One day Killian came up to him on the street.

"You're getting too nosey around here," he said, "and this place isn't good for your health. You were pretty good in the sticks, they say, so you'd better get back where you belong."

"I've always handled any town I took hold of," Bill said quietly, "and I'm not running away from big talk."

Now it was october. A new consignment of dope must soon come in. He would be ready. On the twentieth, he came home for the week-end.

"I've spotted the head of the dope business," he said, at dinner. "I'm going to get him; and then I'm coming home."

"Who is he?" I asked, and he told me the name and what he knew of him. "He has a fine home in Kansas City," he said.

A week went by. He told Hugh Sawyer, a young fellow whom he made his deputy, to watch for Killian. Two more trusted friends he enlisted. And on friday, october 31, their man came in.

By three minutes – five minutes – so these three watchers said, Bill missed him. And the dope runner, warned that Bill was near, cached his shipment of dope and fled on the Okemah road. Bill could have walked in and secured the dope. But he waited to arrest Killian with the goods, when he came back to retrieve it.

"Watch!" he told his aides.

Saturday, november 1, all day they waited, one always near the place where the dope was hidden. But Killian did not come.

Sergeant David Thompson, on furlough from Fort Sill, came to visit his friend Eva Caton who now kept a woman's house at Wewoka. He would like, he said, to see the sights of the oil fields. But Mrs. Caton did not keep a car, and they talked of hiring one. She spoke of this Rose Lutke, also madam of a house.

"Don't spend money for that," said her friend. "I'm going to Okemah with Wiley Lynn, and there's room for you two."

About noon they started, Lynn making no objection to taking her friends. He drove a Ford touring car, of the Model T then in use. Thompson and Mrs. Caton had the back seat.

"There's some wine back there," said Lynn, the prohibition enforcement officer, presently.

They found a half-gallon fruit jar, drank, and passed it forward. The two in front drank. "Lynn held it to his lips," swore Mrs. Caton on the witness stand. "I couldn't see if he swallowed."

The half-gallon was soon gone. "I'll get some more," promised Lynn. Twice he stopped at houses and brought out corn liquor and brandy such as was made by the local bootleg stills. They reached Okemah, where Lynn and Rose Lutke left the others at lunch and went to see the sheriff. When they returned, Lynn said, "We're going to Cromwell."

On the witness stand, later, the prohibition officer declared that he took Rose Lutke along to search possible women arrested. Her business as madam of a bawdy house, and the fact that she was at that time under bond for selling whiskey no doubt were considered excellent qualifications for employment by the United States government agent.

Through the Indian summer sunshine, the red-brown jack-oak thickets, with splashes of scarlet sumac, the party drove. Twice more – four times in all – Lynn stopped and procured liquor. He himself drank sparingly. He didn't want to be drunk – then.

Darkness fell. The electric lights of Cromwell glowed before them. In the back seat, Eva Caton collapsed, dead drunk.

It was near ten o'clock, the night life in full swing. Strident music blared from the dance halls. The picture theater was ablaze. Along both sides of the rutted street, cars were parked. There were no street lights, only the glow from windows of business places. Other cars were driving back and forth.

Lynn drove the length of the main street. But the tall form he sought was not seen. He shouted, and Rose Lutke joined in shrilly, a string of obscene curses: "Hurrah for Judge Crump, the . . . !"

At the T intersection, the car turned and came back. It halted across the street from Murphy's place. A wooden sidewalk ran in front. A single electric lamp over the door lighted the walk and entrance. Lynn and Rose Lutke got out. He drew his gun and fired it, then started walking across the street. The woman waited.

Bill sat on a stool at the Murphy's lunch counter. Beside him was W. E. Sirmans. A shot sounded. They both rose. Bill, who had discarded his heavy belt and forty-five, drew his automatic from his pocket, palming it in his hand, which he held down at his side.

"Stay back. I'll see about it," he said. But Sirmans followed.

Into the light from the doorway a tall man came walking, a large pistol in his right hand. Bill met him at the edge of the sidewalk.

"What do you mean?" he said. At the same instant, his hand grabbed Lynn's wrist jerking his hand with the gun in it, above their heads. His right hand held his own gun against Lynn's side.

"Somebody get his gun," he called.

Hugh Sawyer had been drinking freely, but was yet able to spring forward and snatch the gun from Lynn's upraised hand. Bill relaxed his hold, shifting his hand to grasp Lynn's arm and lead him off. But lightning quick the breed's hand moved down; snatching a hidden gun from its pocket. Two quick shots!

Bill Tilghman crumpled against Sirmans, who caught him but was himself overbalanced, and the two fell at the edge of the walk. With his gun smoking, Lynn leaped across the body of his victim, and thrust it against Hugh Sawyer.

"Gimme that gun!" he snarled. Dazed with fright and drink, the other handed it over. With a gun in each hand, holding upon the crowd, Lynn ran back to his car and sprang in. Rose Lutke scrambled after him. The engine roared, and the car was gone.

Eager hands lifted the fallen marshal, bore him into a second-hand furniture store near by and laid him upon a couch. The grayness of death already was upon his face. Blood flowed from two body wounds, one just below the heart. His breath came heavily, gasping. Once he uttered a faint moan.

"He's trying to talk," said some one. But no conscious spark remained. The end had come for him when the murderer's slugs tore into his body. Within fifteen minutes the last breath was drawn. The Dark Presence had lifted the veil; called softly, "Come!"

Servant of the law through fifty faithful years, Bill Tilghman had at last made the supreme sacrifice.

So quickly had it all happened that no one recognized Lynn. One man thought to get the license number of the car. Half a dozen set out in pursuit. Telephones buzzed warning to all nearby towns to watch for it.

W. F. Hancock, an oil man, picked up Bill's automatic from the street. He put his finger over the muzzle, and it came away clean. The gun had not been fired; the magazine was full.

The fateful call came to the house. "Mr. Tilghman's been shot. Please call Governor Trapp and tell him."

"Is he badly hurt?" I asked, but no answer. Tench, our oldest son, who had started his first year at the university, was home for the week-end; also my brother who made his home with us.

"Get the car out. We'll go," I said. I called Governor Trapp, who was not at home, but Mrs. Trapp relayed the message.

A second call came, from W. E. Snelson, chief of police of Oklahoma City, who had worked under Bill. He was just leaving with a car-load of officers. "Don't go, Mrs. Tilghman. He's . . . he's gone."

Other cars roared through the night, state officers and newspaper men. My brother also went. By morning it was announced that Wiley Lynn, the killer, had surrendered himself to the U.S. Commissioner at Holdenville, and was in jail there.

To my brother and others, three different men told of Bill's watch for the shipment of narcotics, and his narrow miss of taking Killian with the goods. The dope runner himself came to Cromwell that morning and went into the undertaking rooms where Bill's body lay. He came out.

"I guess the damned . . . will not interfere with our business any more!" he said.

A forlorn, cadaverous figure, Snake, the dope-head watched the undertaker's wagon that bore away his friend. Tears ran down his cheeks.

"He was the only man who ever gave me a kind word since I can remember," he said.

Hugh Sawyer moved about, unresting, torn by savage thoughts. "If only I hadn't been half drunk! If only I'd had sense enough to help Uncle Bill after I took Lynn's gun!"

"The dope ring didn't dare kill him themselves, so they sent Lynn," ran the talk. Killian had gone toward Okemah. Lynn had conferred with persons there, and probably received his orders.

There was talk of calling the militia. But the governor saw no need. For now quiet settled on the oil fields. The quiet of fear. If the dope and liquor ring could command the very officers sworn to destroy them, and murder a man of Bill Tilghman's standing, who could be safe? "They'll get Judge Crump next."

Many of the underworld went away to avoid questioning. And the seal of fear was upon the lips of good citizens. Men on the streets guarded their words in ordinary talk. Especially the men who had known of the dope shipment, were missing. The attorney general found few witnesses.

One silence, not of fear, came sunday night. For the first and only time in oil field history, every dance hall in Cromwell was closed, "For Uncle Bill."

Bill's body was brought home, and lay in state in the capitol, where only two men had been so honored before him.

"He died for the state," said Governor Trapp, as he made the executive order. The flag floated at half-mast.

Services were held wednesday at the First Presbyterian church, of which Bill was a member.

"He was truly a prince of men, who lies here," said

Reverend Clyde W. Howard. He read a scripture service hopeful and uplifting. A quartet sang, *Lead Kindly Light,* and *Crossing the Bar.* There was also a tenor solo with words from *Revelations, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."* Pall-bearers were Governor M. E. Trapp, ex-governor J. B. A. Robertson, Brigadier General Roy V. Hoffman, U.S. Marshal Alva McDonald, and Bill's two former undersheriffs, G. W. Swanson and W. H. Crume. The list of honorary pall bearers included the most notable men of the state. Senator Elmer Thomas was present, as was Bill's sister Josie, from Dodge City.

After the church services, the funeral party entrained for Chandler. Here the Masonic and Odd Fellows' lodges where Bill still had his membership, conducted committal services. Flags hung at half-mast along the main street. Besides his old friends here, there came two cars of people from Cromwell, with a large floral piece, "From Cromwell friends."

As his body was lowered to its rest in earth – he who had so many times lain down to sleep on it – the autumn sun burned crimson in the west, its last rays slanting through the brown-leaved oaks, and lighting up the church spires and courthouse tower of the town he had helped to build. That glory of the sunset, the sun flinging triumphal banners up the sky, was his last of earth.

Letters came from all over the country, and many national magazines published articles about him. Omer K. Benedict, newspaper man and long-time friend wrote a personal letter, in which he summed it up:

"Bill Tilghman was one of God's noblemen. I never knew a man who possessed so much physical bravery combined with so much moral courage. He has served his country as well as any soldier."

The state senate, meeting in january next, held a memorial hour for him. And on april 22, anniversary of the Run, a horse with empty saddle, and wearing Bill's guns was led in the parade sponsored by the Eighty-niners.

The Trial — A Measure of Shame

Immediately after the killing, the law bestirred itself. The attorney-general, prohibition officers and federal district attorney, and county officers, took up the case.

Wiley Lynn made a statement saying that the shot fired when he got out of the car was accidental.

"He (Tilghman) had his gun in my side and had threatened to kill me . . . *I don't believe Tilghman fired."*

Rose Lutke also swore to a statement in which she told of having liquor, and the drunkenness of their companions. She told how Lynn met the marshal, and although she was on the other side of the street, she said she heard the words spoken between them: Lynn, "My gun accidentally went off," and Tilghman, "You . . . I've got you now."

Lynn was too skilled with guns to let one go off. "The shot was fired for the one purpose of getting Tilghman into the street," said W. M. Curtis, who was a witness.

Lynn meanwhile had time to consult attorneys. And on the *third day* after the killing he bolstered his story of self-defense by a search warrant authorizing him to search the Murphy dance hall for liquor; and claimed that he was going into the place in discharge of his duty, when Tilghman interfered. This search warrant was roughly filled out in pencil, bore the date of november 1, and was issued by Park Crutcher, the U.S. commissioner to whom Lynn had surrendered. It did not bear his seal as required by law.

Some time before this Crutcher, a U.S. official, had been jailed as drunk, in Wewoka. Lynn secured his release. He was a witness for Lynn at the trial. He repeated that he had issued the warrant "on the date written," but he never could be induced to say he had issued it on november 1st. With the limelight on his conduct, Crutcher "resigned" some months afterward.

Lynn obtained in U.S. district court, a temporary injunction forbidding state officers to try him. In january, 1925, a hearing was had at Tulsa, with Judge Arba S. Van Valkenburgh, from Kansas City, presiding. Witnesses were presented only by Lynn, with the state attorney merely making a plea at the end. W. E. Sirmans told of the killing, as he saw it, and declared that Bill did not fire a shot. And W. F. Hancock told of picking up his gun and testing it.

Eva Caton told a detailed story of their trip, of Lynn the prohibition agent, getting liquor at several places, and their drinking; and Thompson told the same. Rose Lutke's testimony agreed on these points, though her story varied considerably from her previous sworn statement.

Lynn himself took the stand, stating that he got a search warrant from Park Crutcher; that his gun was fired accidentally.

"Sawyer had my right arm raised aloft with the pistol. Tilghman had his left hand at my throat and his gun in my ribs. 'It's Lynn, Uncle Bill,' I said; and

Tilghman replied, 'I don't give a d-- who it is. I've got you now and I'm going to kill you.'"

"I *pushed Tilghman's gun aside* and drew another gun . . . and fired *three* bullets into him."

Even a man less quick with a gun than Bill, if intent on killing, with his gun against the opponent's ribs, could have pulled the trigger three times over in the time required for such an exchange of conversation. Tilghman's words, as given by Lynn, are contradictory, the first sentence implying that he did not know it was Lynn; the second part that he did know him. Sirmans declared that Bill spoke no word except his call for someone to get Lynn's gun.

Lynn also swore that he fired *three* bullets. The "pushed the gun aside," also was changed.

"Continuance of the *habeas corpus* is denied," said Judge Van Valkenburgh. "I do not feel I should render a bald decision in this case without pointing out some of the matters pertinent thereto. No officer has any right to take liquor which he has confiscated, and use it, drink it, or give it to others, more than any other citizen would have. It is even more reprehensible for the officers to do this than it is for laymen."

He plainly, though guardedly, expressed his suspicion of the search warrant. "I do not hesitate to say that if Lynn had proceeded to this dance hall with his search warrant in the usual manner, and then met with interference – if this stood out in bold relief there would be no question of the government's duty in this case.

"But there has been no evidence that Tilghman was not a peace officer. There is other evidence to show that he was doing his duty."

Lynn was tried for murder in the district court of

Seminole county, at Wewoka, may 21, 1925. Assisting the county attorney were assistant Attorney-General Edwin Dabney, Prince Freeling, former attorney-general, and General Roy V. Hoffman. Mr. Freeling, however, was considered the leader. Judge Frank Mathews, of Mangum, as far as possible from this locality, was appointed to preside.

The prosecution was perhaps over-confident. Eva Caton, whose testimony at the *habeas corpus* hearing was most damaging to Lynn, could not be found. Neither could W. E. Sirmans, chief witness for the state. One of the jurymen was, like Lynn, a part-blood Indian, and, it was said, held out for his acquittal. The defense at first insinuated that Tilghman was placed at Cromwell by the governor for the purpose of collecting graft. Lynn's attorney said that Tilghman told the governor that he was merely "regulating" the dance halls and liquor joints; and quoted the governor as replying, "Fine, that's just what I want you to do. Let them run."

Such pretense of knowledge of a private conversation in the governor's office was absurd on the face of it. The city council made it the marshal's duty to collect the monthly occupation tax from business places, the town being too new to have the regular state taxes. It was a common method, and both Guthrie and Oklahoma City had operated thus during their first year. Bill had turned in every penny, although his own salary was more than two hundred dollars behind.

The court promptly ruled out efforts to make something of this. "Even if you proved he was collecting graft," he said, "that would not justify Lynn in killing him."

Witnesses were introduced to say that Bill had made threats against Lynn. Rose Lutke, on cross examination, admitted she did not know Lynn had a search warrant or that he intended to search Murphy's dance hall.

A new witness, an oil field vagabond, swore that his car was parked across the street, and that his windshield was pierced by a bullet, which, it was claimed, came from Tilghman's gun. Asked to demonstrate the sound of the shots, he clapped his hands evenly, three times. He said they all sounded just alike. Here the state missed a chance, for the sound of Lynn's 38 revolver, and Tilghman's automatic, would have been quite different.

Lynn himself told much the same story that he told at the *habeas corpus* hearing. But now he said that he fired two shots instead of three. W. F. Hancock, for the state, testified that he had tested Bill's gun and found it had not been fired.

Lynn said: "I grabbed his gun (Tilghman's), and held it." (Previously he "had pushed it away.") "He was trying to pull it off, I had my finger between the hammer of the gun, where it couldn't go off."

Mr. Freeling had failed to bring Bill's gun along. He could have used it now. This testimony had been fixed up on the assumption that Bill was carrying his old forty-five. The hammer of this, when cocked, stands up, and a finger might be slipped under it. But in an automatic, it is enclosed, and such a thing is impossible. The prosecution called attention to this, but weakly, while if Lynn had been forced to demonstrate with Bill's gun, his perjury must have been evident.

The defense attorneys of course represented Bill as a blood-thirsty killer boasting of the numbers of men he had shot. One witness swore that Bill was under the influence of liquor.

Two of Lynn's friends from his home county were made to swear that they never knew Lynn to drink.

On friday, the second day of the trial, Lynn dropped from his pocket a loaded revolver. He said that this was accidental, and his attorney tried to smooth it over by saying he had told him to bring it. The court rebuked him sharply, and turning to Lynn said, "You have not heard the last of this. . ."

After an all-night session, the jury returned a verdict of "not guilty," based, as they said, on self-defense.

Law abiding people everywhere, and those who knew Bill's honor and integrity, were shocked. Many newspapers printed editorials of protest.

Judge Mathews, a few weeks later, in a letter to General Hoffman, said: "To all persons of average intelligence and experience, it was clearly apparent that the evidence presented by the defense was unnatural and could not be accepted as true by any thinking person . . . I was convinced by the evidence that it was a cold blooded assassination . . . It is to be regretted that a man's reputation should be subjected to the perjured testimony of such wreckage of humanity as appeared for the defense in that case."

As soon as the verdict had been announced, I was asked by a newspaper reporter for a statement. The answer which I gave then, after the lapse of years, still seems pertinent. "The outcome of this trial has added a supreme dishonor to the law in Oklahoma. Today, the measure of shame is full."

As Lynn stood receiving congratulations of a small group of friends, Judge Mathews bade the bailiff bring him before the bar. Briefly and forcefully he reminded Lynn of the rule that no suppliant should come into court with arms.

"The court can not conceive of a man so bold, so insolent," he concluded. Then he sentenced Lynn to ninety days in jail for contempt of court. Lynn appealed and the sentence was upheld. Eventually, after he had "jumped his bond," he was arrested and made to serve this time.

Res Sequentes

On his acquittal, Wiley Lynn gave out a statement that he would resume his work as prohibition officer. He was seen around the oil fields, and most people believed that he was still in office. But the enforcement division had suspended him immediately after the killing of Tilghman, and he was never restored.

Lynn's name appeared from time to time in the daily press.

1925 *May 28* acquitted of murder of Bill Tilghman; sentenced to 90 days for contempt.

June 18 M. F. Meadows, head of prohibition enforcement in Oklahoma, told reporters that Lynn was still under investigation from Washington.

June 22 arrested, charge of intoxication, at rooming house of Rose Lutke, Wewoka.

July 23 M. F. Meadows informed press that Lynn was no longer a federal officer.

Sept. 16 Lynn arrested at new oil town of Slick, charged with riot.

1927 *March 20* arrested at Ardmore, drunk and creating disturbance.

Aug. 26 Oklahoma City, makes talk that he would become special officer for sheriff of Pottawatomie county, Shawnee. Sheriff at once denied this.

Aug. 28 arrested and jailed at Shawnee, drunk, "taking most of the sidewalk."

Dec. 5 Appellate court affirmed his 90-day sentence. Lynn did not surrender; bond declared forfeited.

1928 *April 11* arrested at St. Louis, small oil town, and taken to serve 90 days in jail.

Lynn and his wife separated after the trial, and when he was not around the oil fields, he made his home with his parents near Madill.

Rose Lutke, "Lynn's woman" appeared in the news also. She was sentenced in 1925 to six months and fined five hundred dollars for possession of liquor. She professed religion, and the church people helped her, but could get nothing more than a 30-day parole "for hospital treatment." So she served the jail time, but they raised five hundred dollars to pay her fine. She was arrested in 1926 charged with beating a board bill. Next, 1930, she pleaded guilty in federal court on conspiracy to handle liquor, being concerned in a bootlegging ring. She received six months sentence, but was paroled. A few weeks later she was arrested, charged with vagrancy and disorderly conduct.

After this, Rose Lutke dropped from sight. Wiley Lynn, however, had yet a blazing page to write.

On a hot sunday in august, 1932, the drug store in the town of Madill was crowded with customers seeking relief with ice cream and cold drinks. Tables and fountain counter were full. Rody Watkins, a farm youth of seventeen, sat on a stool, and complained that "nothing ever happens here; not even a ball-game today."

At a table in the rear sat Crockett Long, resident of the county, for fifteen years an officer, and now employed at the capitol as an officer of the state bureau. He was home for sunday. Slightly deaf, he did not hear the challenge of Wiley Lynn who came walking through the crowded place.

"Crockett Long, throw 'em up! I'm going to get you sometime and it might as well be now!"

Warned by the face of his friend William Baker, who sat with him, Long turned and sprang up. Lynn, stalking onward said again,

"Put 'em up Long! I'm going to get you!"

"Put down that gun, Lynn!" cried Long.

Their guns roared together. Baker, who was nearest, believed Lynn fired first. Crockett Long fell, hit in the leg, but he drew up on his elbow and continued firing.

Panic filled the room. Women screamed. Men cried out "Down! lie down!" Rody Watkins fell against the counter as a slug tore through his body. "Nothing ever happens . . ." With the turn of midnight he was dead. John Hilburn, next to him was badly wounded.

Wiley Lynn, regardless of the lives imperilled, poured shot after shot into his fallen victim. Long's bullets struck him, too, but he came on and was within five feet when his gun clicked, empty.

Long's shots ceased at the same time, and he collapsed. Lynn turned, blood spurting from four wounds. He stepped over the body of Rody Watkins and passed out the door. Twenty steps and he too fell.

Crockett Long was dead. The wounded were rushed to a hospital. John Blalock, owner of the drug store, Baker, the stockman, and others described the tragedy in substantial agreement. It was said that Long had once arrested Lynn, who bore a grudge against him. Also, that Lynn had bragged he would "get" John Gleen, the Madill police chief, before the sun set. But Gleen, who worked mostly at night, was asleep at this time. Lynn had no commission nor authority to carry a gun.

With his crimes upon him, the blood of two innocent men and two faithful servants of the law, Bill Tilghman and Crockett Long, Wiley Lynn died at dawn. In the final blazing chapter he had written, beyond possibility of perjured denial, was the proof of his evil; of his wanton disregard of law and of human life.

Bill's grave was cared for, but it was more than ten years before I was able to place a small marker. A modest monument is still to come. I became the bread winner. Tench wished to help, and offered to give up his university course. But this I would not permit. He must go on, though earning his own way. Richard and Vonia, daughter of his first wife, within the next five years came to lie beside their father.

In 1926, Honorable Fletcher B. Swank, congressman from our district, called me, and said that he would introduce a bill to give me a "relief" in the usual sum of five thousand dollars because of Bill's death at the hands of a U.S. employe. Mr. Swank was out of congress for one term, then he again introduced the bill and continued to work for it. Because of the fact that Lynn had been acquitted, the house committee on claims made an exhaustive examination of the case. W. E. Sirmans of his own accord swore that he had fled to avoid being a witness at Lynn's trial, because he was threatened and believed that he would certainly be killed if he testified.

Judge Frank Mathews who presided at Lynn's trial, wrote to the committee, much as he had written before: "After hearing the evidence in the trial, there was created a lasting impression in my mind that Tilghman was murdered, and that it amounted to a practical assassination."

On february 16, 1933, the house passed the bill[32] to pay the widow of Bill Tilghman five thousand dollars. The report of the committee was also printed in full in the Congressional Record.[33] After reciting Bill's distinguished services, and the circumstances of his death, the report said:

---

[32] H.R. 6933.

> The facts and circumstances and the statements and opinions of the decent and law-abiding people all point to a deliberate and wanton murder.

The bill now went to the senate. But only two weeks remained of the session. The Hoover administration was ending and the country was in a panic crisis. This bill, then, with scores of others, was not taken up, and "died" with the close of the session.

When congress convened again, Mr. Swank reintroduced the bill and continued to work for it, as did Senator Elmer Thomas, and in succession, Mr. Josh Lee, Mr. R. P. Hill, and Mr. Gomer Smith. Mr. Lee became senator and did what he could there. Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas also favored it. The bill was passed three times by the house, and also was reported favorably by the committee but not voted on. In the senate, it was held up in the committee of claims, and eventually died.

The legislature of Oklahoma, in 1935, passed a resolution, memorializing congress to pass this bill. And the next legislature, 1937, with considerable change of personnel, also voted a similar resolution.[34] The U.S. senate ordered it printed in full – not usual for such matters – in the Congressional Record, but took no further action.

The resolution from the Oklahoma legislature, recited the facts of the Henry Virkula case, in which congress had acted within three years, paying his widow five thousand dollars. Virkula was a resident of northern Wisconsin, and often went into Canada. When returning, he refused to halt for search of his automobile for liquor by the U.S. border guards. Instead he stepped on the gas. The officers fired after the car, and by chance hit and killed Virkula.

---

[33] Congressional Record, House, february 16, 1933, p. 4402.

[34] Oklahoma, Senate Concurrent Res. no. 17, 1937.

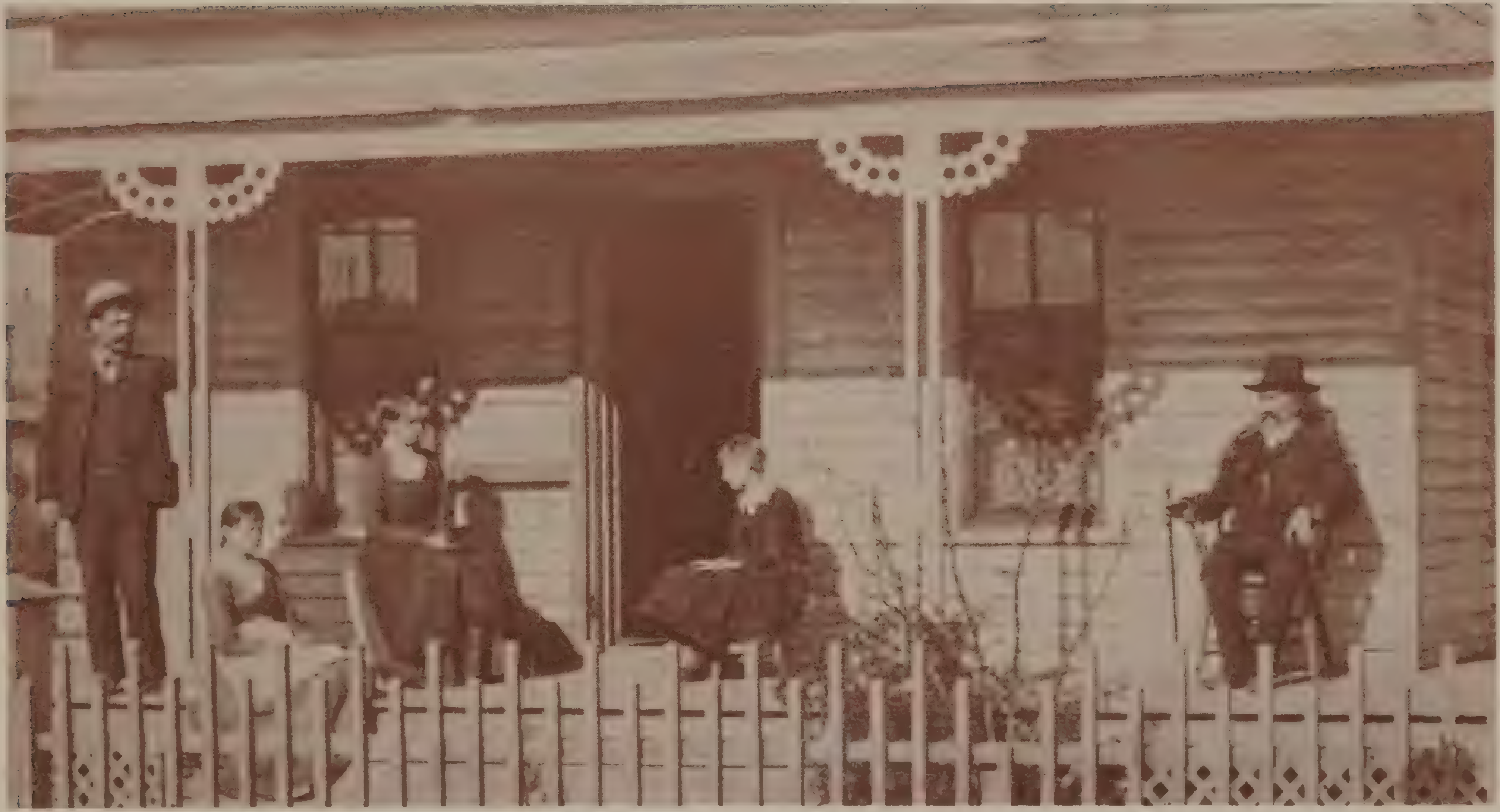
The Oklahoma resolution said:

> *Whereas:* The payment in the case of a man killed while fleeing from the law, and withholding said payment from the widow of the man killed in upholding the law appears unjust, and tends to encourage law breakers and radicals, and to discourage good and faithful officers, and to cause good citizens to lose respect for the law, and is a reflection on good government and is against public polity:

Therefore it prayed that congress "Delay no longer . . . such reparation as may be just and equitable."

Perhaps there were some blushes. But no action was ever taken. Though Oklahoma members of congress still worked on it, twenty years passed, and under a rule of limitations, it could no longer be presented.

PLATE 2



THE HOME OF WILLIAM (SR.) AND AMANDA TILGHMAN IN DODGE CITY
Bill's father and mother seated, son Frank at left, and
two daughters of their eldest son Dick.

PLATE 3

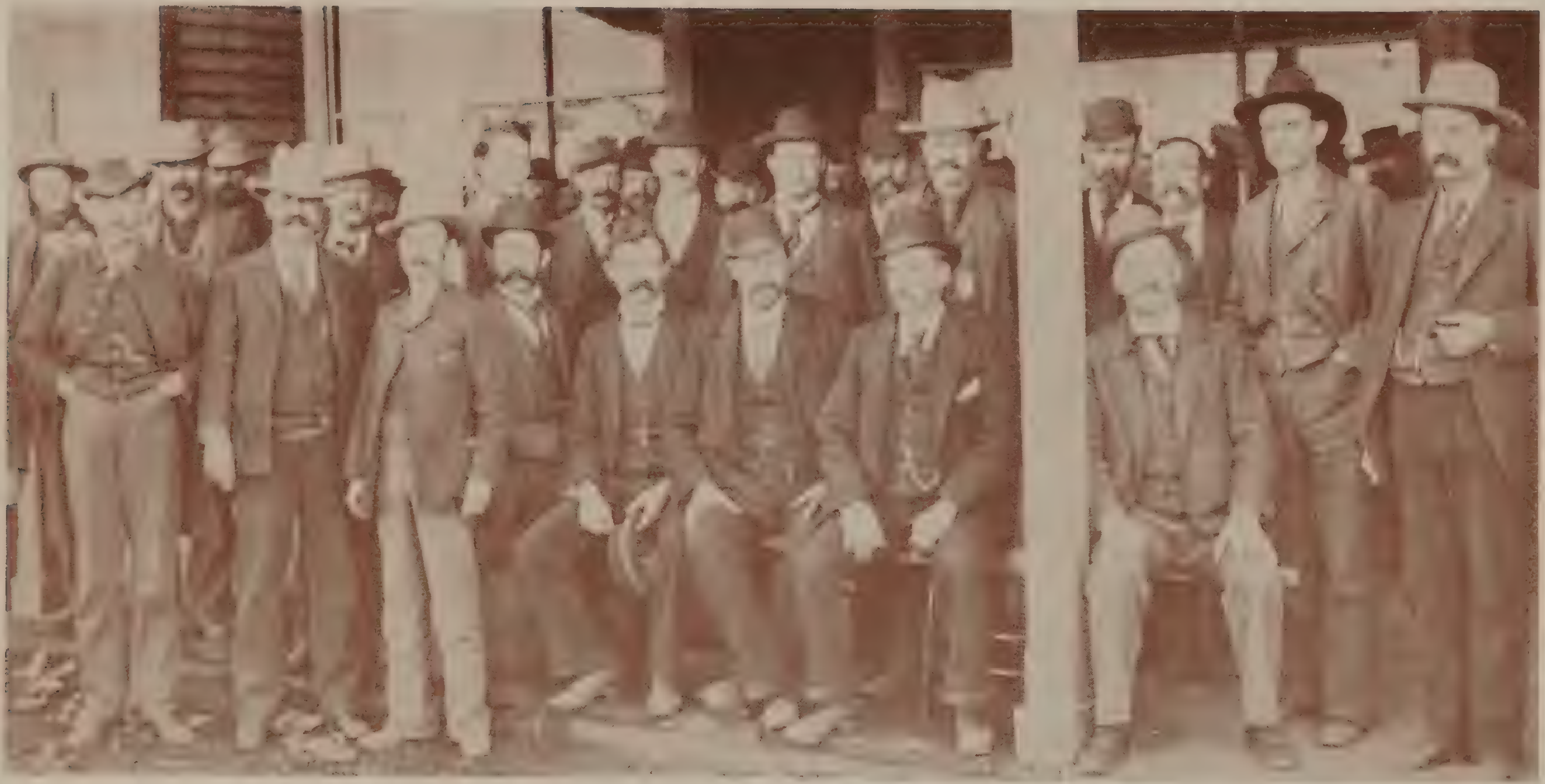
BILL TILGHMAN, AT 19, WITH HIS HORSE "CHIEF"

PLATE 4

FLORA KENDALL
Bill's first wife. Married, 1877; died, 1900.

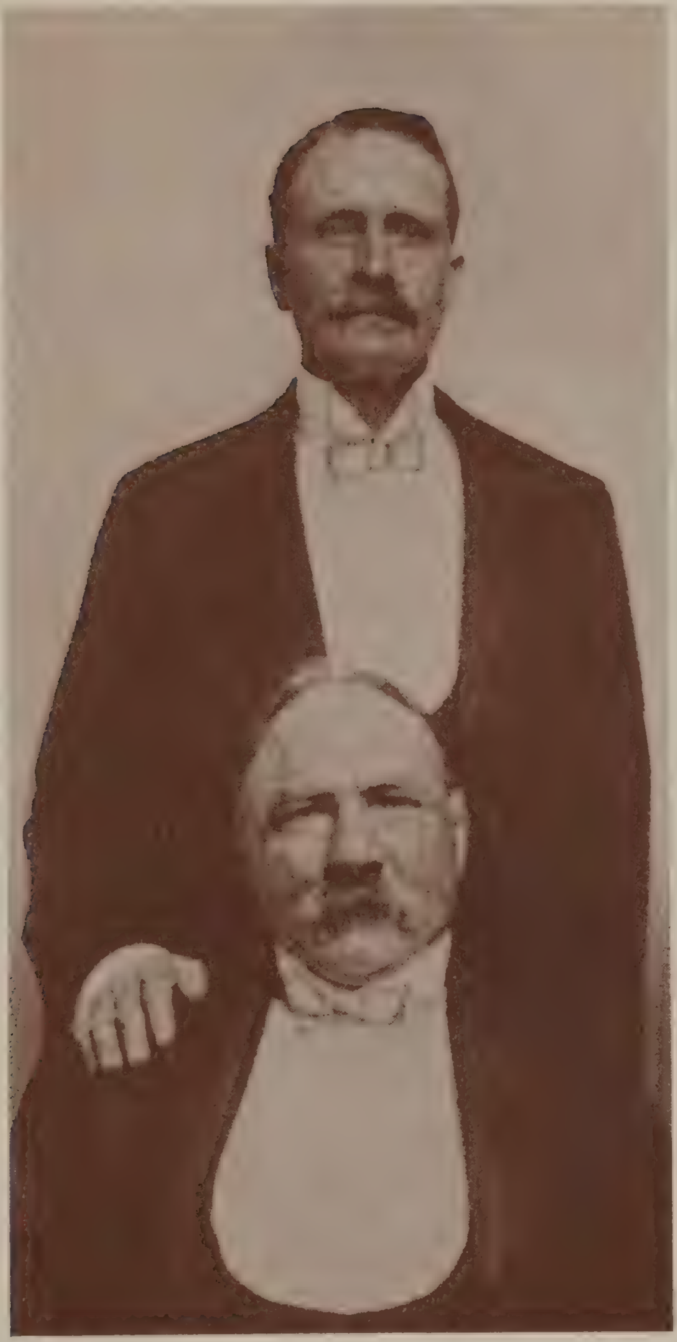
ZOE AGNES STRATTON, 1937
Bill's second wife and author of this biography.

PLATE 5

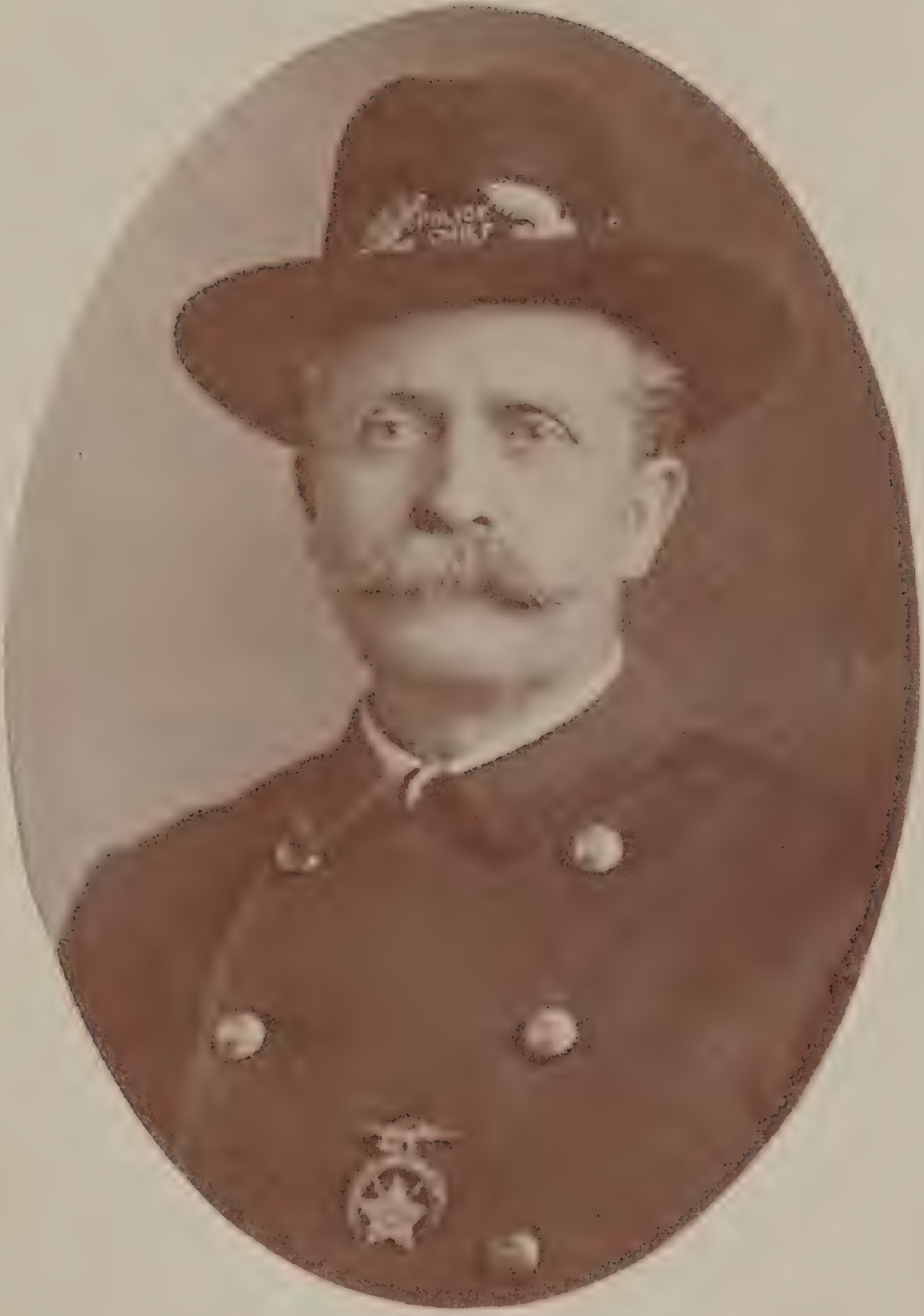


THE FIRST CITY OFFICERS OF PERRY, OKLAHOMA, 1893

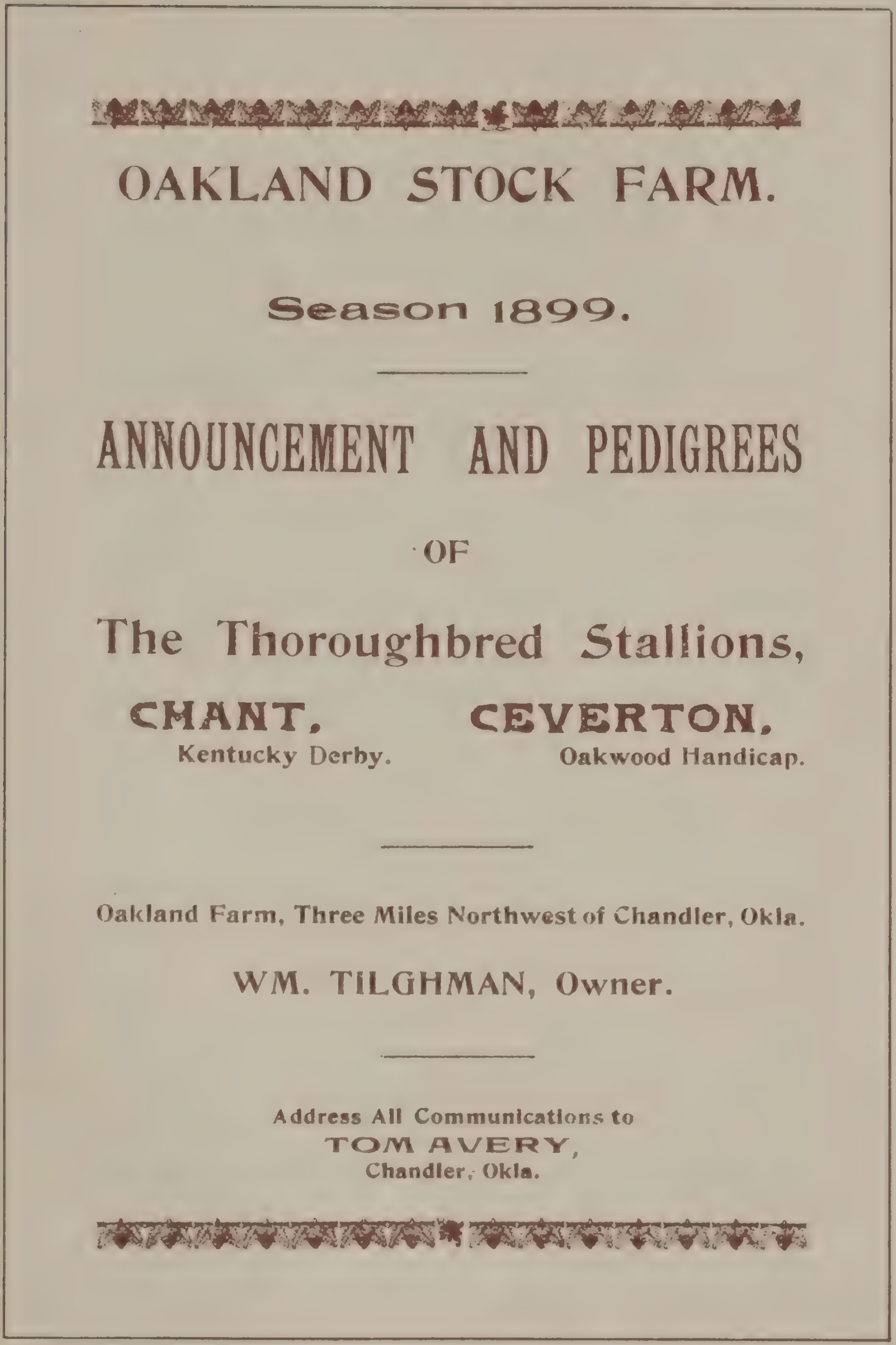
Tilghman, City Marshal, is at right center wearing badge. Others in the front row are J. Davis, Asst. Marshal Heck Thomas, Wharton, Drake, Jacobs, Weideman, Mayor John Brogan, in front of Tilghman; Flock, Friend, and Cutler.



Bill Tilghman and Chris Madsen
At a White House reception, Washington, 1909.



BILL TILGHMAN AS CHIEF OF POLICE,
OKLAHOMA CITY, 1911



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The pamphlet contained ten pages giving the description, history, racing summary, and pedigree for each horse, and the terms of breeding.

Plate 9

Bill Tilghman's home in Chandler, Oklahoma

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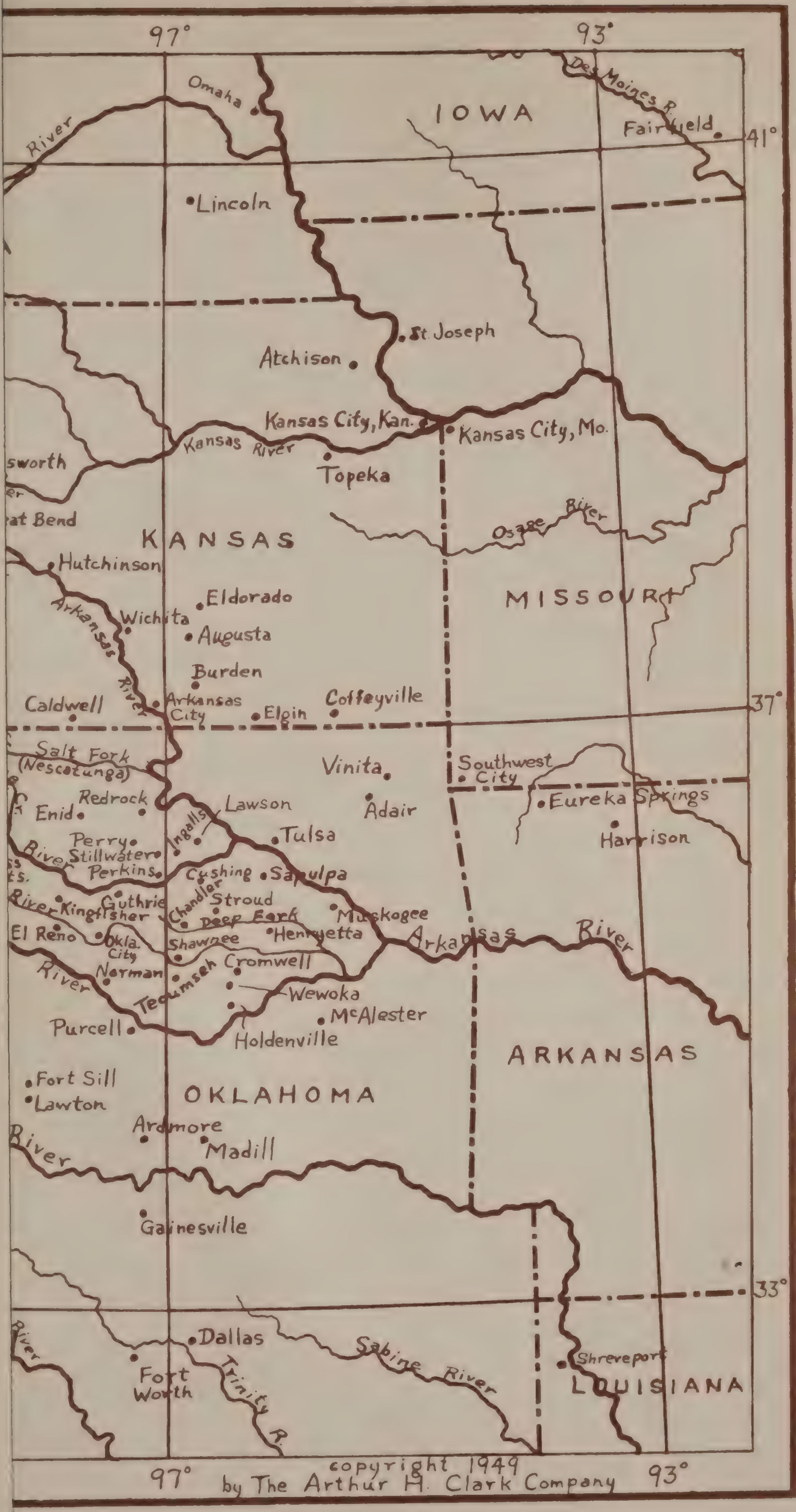
97°
93°
Omaha
Des Moines R.
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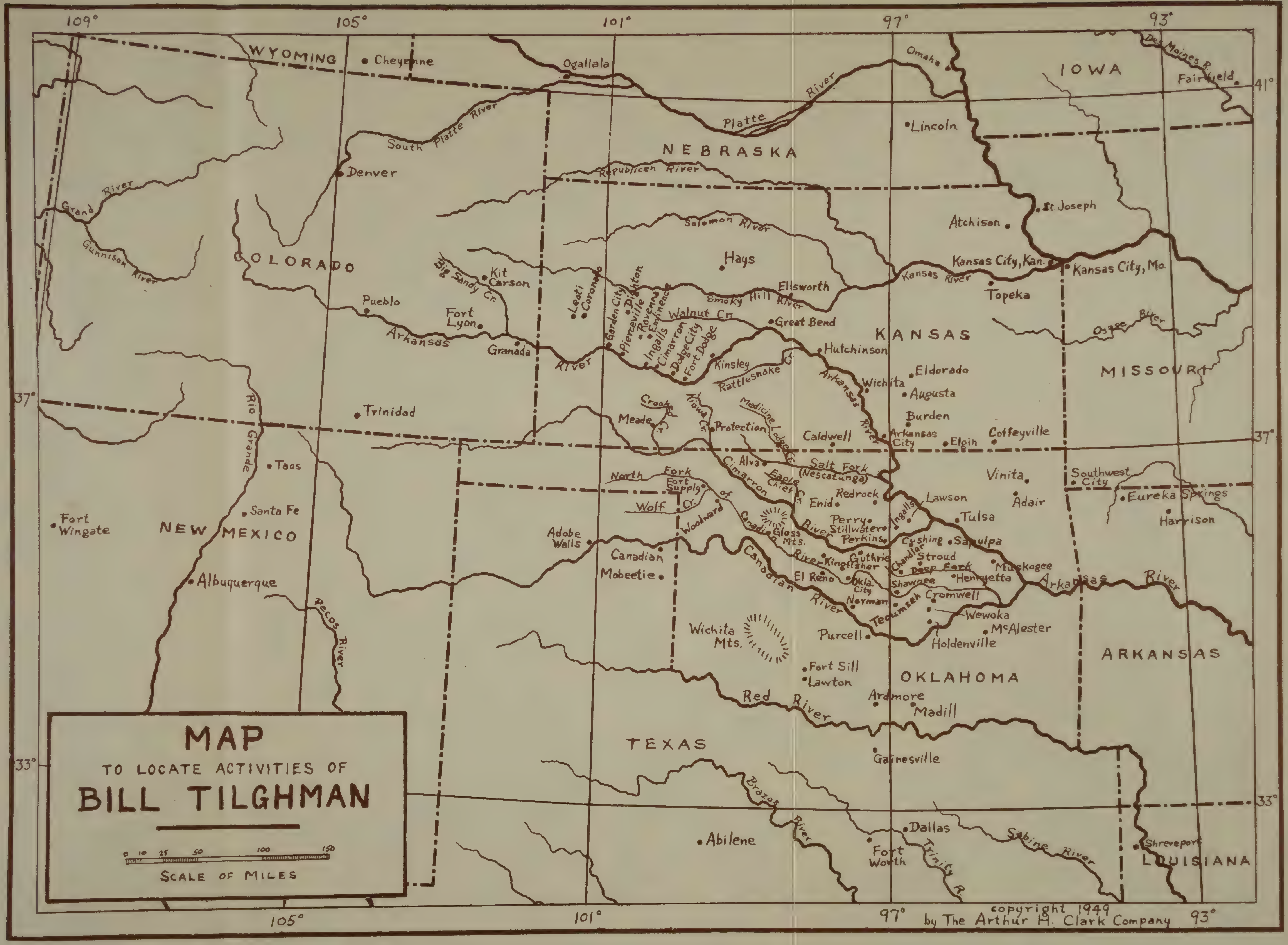

MAP
TO LOCATE ACTIVITIES OF
BILL TILGHMAN

0 10 25 50 100 150
SCALE OF MILES
109°
105°
101°
97°
93°
41°
37°
33°
WYOMING
Cheyenne
Ogallala
Omaha
Des Moines R.
IOWA
Fairfield
Platte River
South Platte River
Lincoln
NEBRASKA
Denver
Republican River
Grand River
Gunnison River
St. Joseph
Atchison
Solomon River
Hays
COLORADO
Kansas City, Kan.
Kansas City, Mo.
Kansas River
Topeka
Big Sandy Cr.
Kit Carson
Leoti
Coronado
Garden City
Dighton
Pierceville
Ravanna
Eminence
Ellsworth
Smoky Hill River
Walnut Cr.
Great Bend
Pueblo
Fort Lyon
Granada
Arkansas River
Ingalls
Cimarron
Dodge City
Fort Dodge
Kinsley
Hutchinson
KANSAS
Osage River
MISSOURI
Rattlesnake Cr.
Arkansas River
Wichita
Eldorado
Augusta
Burden
Trinidad
Crooked Cr.
Meade
Kiowa Cr.
Protection
Medicine Lodge Cr.
Caldwell
Arkansas City
Elgin
Coffeyville
Rio Grande
Taos
Alva
Salt Fork (Nescatunga)
Vinita
Southwest City
Eureka Springs
Harrison
North Fork
Fort Supply
Eagle Chief Cr.
Cimarron River
Redrock
Lawson
Adair
Wolf Cr.
Woodward
Enid
Ingalls
Perry
Stillwater
Tulsa
Santa Fe
Fort Wingate
NEW MEXICO
Adobe Walls
Canadian
Mobeetie
Gloss Mts.
Perkins
Cushing
Sapulpa
Canadian River
Kingfisher
Guthrie
Chandler
Stroud
Deep Fork
Muskogee
Henryetta
El Reno
Okla. City
Shawnee
Arkansas River
Albuquerque
Norman
Tecumseh
Cromwell
Wewoka
Pecos River
Wichita Mts.
Purcell
Holdenville
McAlester
ARKANSAS
Fort Sill
Lawton
OKLAHOMA
Red River
Ardmore
Madill
TEXAS
Gainesville
Brazos River
Abilene
Dallas
Fort Worth
Trinity R.
Sabine River
Shreveport
LOUISIANA

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